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THE ANATOMY
of
FRUSTRATION

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THE ANATOMY *of* FRUSTRATION

a modern synthesis by

H. G. WELLS



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“With a few more cubic inches of brain for the average man and a score of years added to the span of life, or even with such an economy of mental exertion through simplification it would be equivalent to these extensions every present difficulty in the human outlook would vanish like a dream.”

WILLIAM BURROUGHS STEELE

“Unity is simpler than a fraction. Partitions are elaborations. The problem of mankind, considered as a whole, is a thousand times clearer than the problem of any partial community, any creed, tribe, nation or empire whatsoever.”

IDEM

Our Author and Robert Burton

THIS title, *The Anatomy of Frustration*, will be novel to many readers, but upon a select company of initiates it will strike very familiarly. For *The Anatomy of Frustration* is a curious work that has been in progress for years. A privileged few of us possess the entire series of eleven well-printed volumes, so interestingly different in their format and arrangement, and more of us have been the recipients of a smaller or greater number of the more recent issues, the Parts "printed for private circulation only." Probably a posthumous volume or so will be available for publication, and there is also a considerable amount of material, too undigested and disconnected, that may never pass even into such limited circulation as the rest. Some of it is highly libellous. This *Anatomy of Frustration* has been the work of an observant watcher of the world. It is an attempt to review and make a synthesis of life to-day. It is the getting together of a modern mind.

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It is not necessary here to add very much to what is commonly known about William Burroughs Steele. Like his chosen exemplar, Robert Burton, the details of his personality stand behind and outside his book. He was a competent and successful business man, "very inventive technically," as *The Times* obituary notice put it, and he played a leading part in building up the well-known group of works at Holgoa, N.J., and the marketing system connected with it. He was a Harvard man who won some little distinction as a pioneer biochemist before business absorbed him—there was an account of his published work in *Nature* for 3rd October, 1935—and his scientific knowledge was of primary importance in the development of the Holgoa products. He was conservative in finance and very progressive in his attitude towards the labour he employed. He not only interested himself in a very generously conceived profit-sharing scheme, but he encouraged the criticism of his operations and management by his workers. That was in the opening decade of the century. His business associates regarded him, not always too tolerantly, as an "innovating radical."

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He betrayed little interest in public affairs until the War. The War and its consequences roused him from a tacit, optimistic progressivism to a state of penetrating and at times feverish enquiry into social structure and political psychology. After August, 1914, until America entered the War, he was chiefly in North France engaged in medical relief, and early in 1918 he was badly wounded in the hip and knee while serving with a medical unit in the Argonne. This crippled him permanently and his health was further impaired by a depressing malaria he contracted in Florida. In spite of these handicaps, or perhaps because of the mental stimulation of these handicaps, he began to work and write boldly and ably upon internal and foreign politics. For a time he served under Noyes in the German territory occupied by the American forces and afterwards he spent the better portion of two years in Geneva. Then, as his health deteriorated, he retired to a comfortable and roomy villa in a seaside garden near Bandol where the greater part of *The Anatomy of Frustration* seems to have been written. It was begun, he mentions, as early as 1922, but the first volume was not

printed until 1927 and only circulated among his friends in 1928.

For the present purpose there is little to be added in the way of biographical matter. He was married in 1905 and divorced, as he says, "quite amicably" in 1909. He married again in 1913 but he never rejoined his wife after the war. His home at Bandol was directed for him by a gifted Polish lady, Madame Titania Stahl, who still occupies the house. He died of heart-failure in his sleep. An overdose of a well-known sedative seems to have helped in carrying him too far below the surface of conscious life for any return, and it has been hinted so broadly that he may have been swayed by the precedent of his inspirer, Robert Burton, that it would be pedantic to ignore the suggestion of suicide. Even the evidence that Robert Burton died by his own act is unsatisfactory; Jordon-Smith, that sedulous Burtonian, scouts the idea, and the imputation that Steele destroyed himself rests on still thinner foundations. There is no evidence whatever that he wanted to die at that time. Before he went to bed that night he had gone out into his garden with Madame Stahl and two guests, and

talked very cheerfully of life upon other planets and the possibility of a conquest of space. He had kept them out late. He was particularly amused by the stories of one of his visitors and laughed very heartily. There was no shadow of portent in his bearing. "Tonight I shall sleep," he said, "and tomorrow we will swim." A sheet of unfinished manuscript lay on his study desk; he had used the memorandum pad by his bedside, and the week ahead was full of small agreeable engagements. . . .

To come to the book. It began as an imitation of Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Its title, its warehouse-like design and plain imitation in the lay-out of the contents enforce that. But almost from the start Steele realized that his book had to be not so much a modernization of Burton as a counterpart and repudiation. The general Introduction—which Steele did not put in front of his first volume but wrote a year or so later on—discusses why this is so.

The keynote of the *Melancholy* is despair. Steele asserts boldly that Burton's book is nothing more than a copious attempt to "write up" Dürer's well-known engraving of *Melancolia*.

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Burton certainly knew this picture well and refers to it. This "sad woman leaning on her arm with fixed looks, neglect habit, etc.," broods over the entire Anatomy.

It is impossible to write of life in that tone of despair to-day, says Steele. Exasperation, yes, but melancholy, no. In three hundred years the human mind has changed! . . .

"Two things there are in common between my work and Burton's," writes Steele. "We both survey the world and we both seek some suggestions for conduct." But Burton was an inactive person living in an insecure aimless age. Great changes were happening in human affairs, but men were still unaware how fundamental they were; they lived lives of violent conflict and contradiction and saw no possible reconstruction of the general conditions of life. (Even up to the time of *Candide*, this inability to imagine a fundamental change in human conditions persisted. It needed an actual experience of revolution before this idea could be released.) Burton found himself melancholy and suffering irrationally, and his search for cure and consolation in the spectacle of the bickering

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disorders about him gathered only the poorest results. As his work grew and intensified, the whole world of men became visibly mad to him, mad not only individually but presently by nations, cities, institutions, communities and associations. His "remedies" dwindled and receded as he advanced towards them. The shadow he cast spread before him.

Not simply was the whole human world pervaded by madness. Burton's realization of the irrational spread into the order of nature, to "vegetals and sensibles." His general Introduction, which he called "Democritus to the Reader," as he revised it for the standard sixth edition, contained, says Steele, the most comprehensive, devastating and hopeless indictment of human folly, injustice, cruelty and unhappiness that has ever been written. It spared neither rulers nor institutions, and going beyond mankind, revealed the writer's profound despair of the whole order of nature out of which man has arisen. For a few pages Burton wrote without restraint. He wrote as one terrified at the things he was saying, but compelled to speak. He was giving way in spite of

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himself to a realization, stupendous for his time, that, by any human standard, the entire order of the universe was irrational.

"Irrational," says Steele, "it may be—but hopeless, no."

Burton was terrified even within himself. He did not dare think that there could be no ultimate "remedies." He unfolds his "Cures for Melancholy" in his second "Partition," his diets, purgings, exercises, baths, blood-letting, physic, music, rectification of air, philosophy, religion. Everything is suggested and then cancelled by its opposite. In his third volume he broadens his issues to the framework of the love-hunger and religious disillusionment, and the inconsistencies of his cures grow more manifest. He lets them contradict each other, bringing them together at last, as if it were a jest, to cancel each other, but he will not sweep their inconclusive disorder aside.

Terror of his own thoughts, Steele points out, was not Burton's only fear. He feared persecution. Abjectly. He was dismayed at the possibility of people in authority penetrating to the reality of

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the dark things he hardly dared say. Fear of his inmost thought was complicated and masked by fear of resentful orthodoxy, fear of being too clearly understood by patron and colleagues. Life without his rooms in Christchurch, his two livings, his access to the Bodleian, was inconceivable to his unadventurous mind. He could not risk that deprivation. So he took refuge behind the mask of "Democritus Junior"; he declared and almost persuaded himself that he was merely filling in the curious outline the laughing ancient had drawn. By making his book so largely a "cento" of quotations and giving every aspect of opinion its turn, Burton shirked responsibility still further. If the assemblage should work out to a blackly pessimistic form, was that his fault? Indeed, he had hardly observed as much. *Was* it so? His work, he urged, was "satirical" and entitled to the privileges and freedoms of that form. It was not to be taken too seriously.

Yet Burton's sure conviction of the madness of his masters and the absurdity of his deference to them peeped out continually. At times his phrasing reminds Steele of the propitiatory insolence of a

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sarcastic Babu. At times, like Rabelais, he was deliberately Tom Fool. "Yoho, my lords and gentlemen! Let me but break wind a little." But what he belched was hatred, scorn and derision for the whole scheme of things in which he found himself. What could one do, he protested, with tears in his eyes, but laugh? He was cruelly cramped and inferior and suppressed. His sexual satisfactions, if he had any, and sexual satisfaction is for most of us the keystone of personal pride, were a mean business of the backstairs and alleys of that monastic university town. In his rhymed address to his book he said:

"If genial handmaid, or some jolly girl,
Look at your jokes, be free and open to her;
Say to her, 'Would my master now were
present,

For dearly does he love such girls as you!'"

And then, poor professional celibate, he felt impelled to add the footnote, "This is said in joke, pray do not mistake me." Or what would the college authorities not have imagined? How might they not have enquired?

All this Steele notes with a curious lack of

sympathy. He betrays the lurking contempt of the man of action for the scholar. Why should any man be so hopeless and so afraid? Steele had forgotten poverty and dependence if ever he knew them. He wrote unconscious of control and danger, and indifferent to adverse criticism. He had grown up in an America still hectically conscious of Progress. He wrote in an atmosphere of projected world change. And so that *Anatomy* of his, instead of being an anatomy of insanity with suggestions for an individual escape, instead of being a search for the origin and cure of black bile, is an aggressive diagnosis of the disorders of life with a far stronger infusion of will. "A mad world, my masters," says Burton, still wearing the cap and bells of the mediæval jester, and he makes his undignified noises and dabs his ineffective bladder, miching malicho, at principalities and powers. Steele is totally unaware of masters; he sees that not only is everybody and everything mad, but he imposes on that his inherent conviction that in everybody and everything lurk the seeds of sanity. "We are all mad, great and small," says Burton. "It is an asylum—and I laugh—but, mind you, with a licence,

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to amuse you, my lords, after the fashion of Democritus."

"But, damn you, we are all trying to be sane," says Steele. "We all want, in our disordered fashion, to make a sane world of ourselves. We have our fits and moods, but that is in us. The odds may be against us, but a fight is possible. Why don't we change things?" And he launches his attack upon principalities and powers, not with the jeers and bladder pats of despair, but with the implacable pick-axe of the innovator.

What is in our way to a sane world? What prevents us? What is preventing us? That is the modern question that takes the place of Burton's "remedies" for melancholy madness. We are no longer content to seek mere escape from the madness in things, we attack the madness in things. Steele can be angry; he can be dismayed and weary to the pitch of neurasthenia, but he never ceases to be combative.

There we have the spirit of our newer age. That is the difference three centuries have made to the human mind. It is not simply the contrast of an active and a sedentary man we have here; it is

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the contrast of an age capable of limitless objectives with an age boxed in imaginatively by the Creation and the Day of Judgment. In Burton's world there was no time for change, there was no idea of fundamental change. Things were fated. Things were so. *The Anatomy of Frustration* would have been as impossible in Oxford in the seventeenth century as *The Anatomy of Melancholy* today.

II

Frustration through Confusions in Thought

WILLIAM BURROUGHS STEELE went so far in his imitation of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, as to sketch out a schedule of frustrations closely similar to Burton's classification of the varieties and remedies of madness and melancholia. He was never altogether satisfied with these schedules; he was altering, adding to, rearranging them to the very end of his life. There are several folders full of these revisions and there exists a copy of his first volume, black with corrections and plump with inserted pages, from which ultimately we may be able to reprint this, the opening most laboured and least satisfactory of all his volumes. He was dissatisfied even with its title, *Frustration through Confusions in Thought*, but he never changed it.

"Before we can deal with frustrations," he begins boldly in his Chapter I, section 1, "we must ask what it is that is frustrated. What is the

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end at which life thrusts? What is this Will in things that is always striving and never getting there?

“What is wanted? What do we want?

“As individuals? As communities? As a species? As a syncytium of life?”

This is a brave opening of the enquiry; it subpœnas practically all religious and philosophical statements of the nature of being, and puts Steele in the rôle of a sort of one-man Royal Commission of enquiry into the significance of the universe, as it has been understood and stated hitherto. His examination of his witnesses is encyclopædic. They profess to tell us “Why” and “What for?” Let us, he says, get all the precision we can. He takes creed after creed, religious cults one after another, barbaric usages and maxims, systems of philosophy from Heraclitus and Lucretius to Nietzsche and Schopenhauer—the mention of these names as cardinal is his own—and of each he makes the same hard and elementary enquiries. First: *What is assumed?* What does this start from? For instance, he points out that among other assumptions of Islam, God the Father-Creator is assumed, defined

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to a certain extent and, for the rest, indicated. He is assumed subject to certain localizations and temperamental responses not very exactly stated but giving him a recognizable "character."

This preliminary enquiry into assumptions is very characteristic of Steele's method. It has the simplicity of a very original intelligence. Upon what implicit beliefs was the mind floating, he asks, before it began to state this or that positively? His courage and industry in assembling this collection of "points of departure" and in attempting a digest of it, must have been enormous. He tried, not very successfully, to train several assistants to help him. But the clear, sharp slash of his mind was part of himself and he could convey it only very partially to others. He slashed anatomically; the other fellows hacked. His analysis is at once so good and so unsatisfactory that it sets the sympathetic reader agog to organize a means of doing it over again better.

His firm belief that men have no right to a thousand contrasted faiths and creeds and that the multitudinousness of people in these matters is merely due to bad education, mental and moral

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indolence, slovenliness of statement and the failure to clinch issues, is in itself an inspiration. He has no tolerance for loose-mindedness. Men have brains that are closely similar, he argues; they are moved in a similar way to these fundamental questionings, their inhibitions are of similar kinds; it is just laziness and untidiness, "mooning and wambling," that makes an "account rendered" of what people believe, so like a museum after a riot. "They abstract to different degrees, they use differently conceived sets of symbols, they start in at different points, they fog and fumble here or there, but that is no excuse for never tidying up the mess." And this amazing man really started attempting to tidy up the Mess—he calls it The Mess!—the mess of fundamental thought throughout the ages! And there are times ever and again and here and there when he really seems to smite lanes of lucidity through that jungle.

He makes a classification of religions and philosophies according to what he calls their "depth of assumption." The simple savage sets his gods and spirits on an unquestioned land and sea and sky. He assumes also a system of purposes and motives

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like his own. That, says Steele, is "assumption at the surface of life." At a slightly profounder level someone makes the daring assumption that these things also have not been here always, sky, land and all the rest of it, man and his motives; dogmatizes that they had a beginning and so invents a Creator. The Creator begins by being an Old Man like Father and expands very slowly towards abstraction. Presently the assumption, the plausible, rash and fatal assumption, is made that things present a dual system, spirit and matter, and presently, pursuant to that assumption, the Creator is disembodied. He becomes the Great Spirit and soon He is no more to be put back into any sort of body than the fisherman's djinn could be packed back into his jar. One must resort to the hocus-pocus of an incarnation to do that, and from that assumed embodiment He is always breaking out again. A divine mind and will which are consecutive in time in their action, presently follow the divine body to the limbo of lost things. So assumptions go deeper and deeper below superficialities and become more and more abstract.

Steele's examination of all these superimposed

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systems of apprehension, summarized with a certain pithy precision and compared relentlessly, is like a man with a small, very bright electric torch exploring vast caverns beneath the foundations of the many edifices of Belief, on which our race lives. They are not separate excavations, he insists. They connect, do these sustaining vaults, like the catacombs of Paris. The deeper one goes, the plainer it is that they all rest on elementary psychological necessities or upon natural fallacies closely associated with and arising out of these necessities. Differences of creed are seen to be differences of phraseology and mental idiom. The more penetrating their psychological analysis, the less men will trouble whether it is "Jehovah, Jove or Lord," or Creative Necessity, or simply Necessity, that encloses and carries them on. Whatever it is, he, she or it, it evoked them and carried them on. They were born in dependence and found themselves free and helpless with infinite reluctance.

What is the end to which life drives? What is the purpose of being? We do not know, probably we can never know fully and comprehensively.

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The form of the question may make an answer impossible. Nowadays that goes almost without saying. Finite creatures by their very nature cannot know fully and completely; knowing is in itself a function of incompleteness, it is the relation of a knower to something it does not completely comprehend. Theologies, "philosophies" therefore follow myths into negation. Of absolute knowledge there are no findings. The more acutely interesting thing, the thing of real practical moment, is this, that while *on the whole* we don't know, yet nevertheless to a certain limited extent we *do*. The exciting, the exalting, idea in our minds is that there are very considerable possibilities of knowing better and more precisely and of bringing together into more effective co-operation a great multitude of aims in life that are at present, merely through lack of lucidity, divergent and conflicting. Here Steele develops his essential thesis, and most of the rest of this big volume, *Frustration through Confusions in Thought*, is a copious and searching attack upon the needless personifications, dramatizations, false classifications, tautologies and mixed metaphors that at present,

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he holds, waste an enormous proportion of our mental energy. Our conceptions of the ends of life, using "our" to indicate the whole human bunch of us, are not nearly so confused and contradictory and incompatible at bottom as they seem to be. Much more agreement is possible among men upon this question of ends, than is generally supposed.

Concurrently with his survey, therefore, he is making an extract, so to speak, of all that can be found in common beneath these divisions and anthropomorphisms, symbolisms and metaphorical obscurities that make religions different and standards of collective activity diverse. If, indeed, we are not looking for exactly the same thing in the fog (the Mess, the Jungle) of human thought, we are at any rate driven by extremely similar motives to seek satisfaction for nearly identical needs. It is the Fog (Mess, Jungle) that brings about our violent collisions and divergences. It is that which to the best of our ability we should do well to clear.

Abruptly in the middle sections of this first volume, Steele passes from his wide survey of

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religions and philosophies into an heroic attempt to cover them by a common statement.

Let me try to summarize here, as compactly and clearly as possible, the way in which he sets about this task. All living substance, he presumes, is aggressive. In that it differs from the inorganic. It has within itself an urge to live more, to increase, extend, prolong itself. Even when it rejects, avoids, escapes, it runs away only that it may fight again another day. And as consciousness appears in the ascendant scale of life, it "appears associated with a process of inhibition and of the organization of impulse, which conduces to the prolongation and extension of the individual."

Steele is very insistent upon this idea that, originally and generally-speaking, consciousness is preoccupied with individual self-preservation. Only in the case of many birds and mammals and a few reptiles and fishes does any conscious solicitude and devotion to offspring or species appear. To provide for the continuation of the species through mechanism or by affording passionate sensuous gratification, was Nature's easier path, and generally she took it. Passionate intellectual gratification

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was a harder thing to build into the primitive self-seeking organism. So the lustful individual is unconscious that he serves the species in his gratification. The normal individual animal is conscious of the urge to live only so far as that concerns its own self.

Now this was all very well, it worked throughout the evolution of animal forms upon this planet, until the mental structure developed so much intelligence and foresight as to look beyond to-morrow. Then trouble began. This, Steele thinks, has occurred only in the case of the human brain. And it has been only very gradually realized by that brain, it has been realized with extreme reluctance, that the more powerful its headlights of intelligence are, the plainer it is that this conscious individual life on which its solitudes centre, drives past the culminations of its powers to enfeeblement and death. Man alone of all animals looks beyond the lures of nature and becomes aware of death waiting for him at the end. All religions, all philosophies of conduct, stripped down to their bare essentials, express the consequent impulse to escape this inherent final frustration.

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And when you come to clear up the fog (Mess or Jungle) you find, says Steele, that the real attempt life is making in all these conscious processes, is an attempt to raise and extend the originally quite narrow and finite self-consciousness so as to lift it over this primary frustration, to enable it to turn at last upon the king of terrors and say:

“O grave! where is thy victory?

O death! where is thy sting?”

Bodily immortality, immortality of the soul, the oversoul, the overman, the superman, the mind of the species, Nirvana, return to the bosom of god, undying fame, progress, service, loyalties, are all expressions at various angles and levels of the same essential resolve: not to live so as to die. Almost all of these death-evasive systems, since they are primarily escapes from self-concentration, imply co-operations. Something outside the individual life cycle is brought in, with which the individual motives can be blended and identified. It is a reaching out to greater entities, if you will, or an attempt to annex fresh territories and establish reserves of imagination and purpose and satis-

faction beyond the reach of personal death. But as long as these reachings out after immortality remain various in their imaginative and intellectual quality, some antique, some modern, some epic, some lyric, some gross and some fine, vague or delicately definite, prosaic or poetic, their mutual contradictions so work out in conduct that we are all at sixes and sevens. Is it not possible, he asks, in the increasing light of modern psychology, to reduce an enormous proportion of these divergences to a common denominator?

And so from these questions of "What is wanted? What do we want?" Steele goes on to the concluding chapters, which he has entitled lengthily, "The Desire for Unlimited Living, and Various Conceptions of Immortality at Successive Stages of Intellectual Development."

With this very interesting conspectus of "Immortalities" I will deal in my next chapter.

III

Immortalities

HAVING launched his thesis—and, one must admit, made a very plausible case for it—that any conscious animal whose intelligence rises to the level of apprehending death, must necessarily set about a research for some sort of immortality, Steele concluded his first book with a classification and scrutiny of what he calls “immortalities,” the various systems of mental escape from a brooding preoccupation with death, to which people in our present world are found to be clinging.

He distinguishes two main classes of immortality, as immortality has been imagined. There are the immortalities that merely extend the individual self in time, extend even the bodily self, retaining all its definiteness, all its idiosyncrasies for ever, and the immortalities that merge the individual in some greater entity, real or imaginary, which is not subject to the personal cycle of birth, growth, maturity, decay and death. The first of

these two classes is the cruder and earlier. The naïve imagination of the child, the savage or the simpleton, cannot get far beyond its current state of mind. It has incorporated or forgotten its previous states of mind and cannot anticipate those to come. When Mrs. Bloggs sits in her back pew and hears the blessed hope of immortality coming from the pulpit, it is Mrs. Bloggs herself, body and soul, thirty-five, a little faded, kindly and tending to put on weight, who is to live, she understands, eternal in the heavens. Dressed rather differently perhaps, more in the bridesmaid style, but otherwise the same. Going on and yet staying put, for ever and ever and ever.

The obvious difficulties confronting those simpler intelligences in their determination to have an indefinite prolongation of themselves—such obvious difficulties, I mean, as are made by the grave, decay and so forth—are brushed aside by a few mentally cheap devices; for instance, a phase of rest and then a bodily reassembling and resurrection is assumed, or there is supposed to be a “spiritual” body, a replica, to which the consciousness of the dead is transferred. That convenient irrational

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dualism of matter and spirit to which, by a great accumulation of terms, phrases and idioms, common human thought is now so wedded, lends itself very readily to the idea of an immortality running not on the flesh and blood track of everyday life but switching to a parallel spiritual track. It is the same, exactly the same old thing, in a different material. The simple mind is too eager to escape the thought of frustration through death, to be easily critical of the means and method of escape.

It is outside the scope of these simpler minds, Steele remarks, to reflect that an individual life is a cycle and not a static state. It is an incessant movement from a birth to a death and a dispersal. Its pace may vary but the movement never ceases altogether and its direction is constant. It is not to be arrested; it is not to be reversed. Its end is as essential to it as its beginning. Where there is no "What next?" there is no life. We pass from state to state, forgetting something and taking in something at every stage. The old man is not the same thing as his boyhood's self or his adolescent self; he is a continuation of that. He has lost powers and gained them.

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By insisting upon this idea, that the individual is a succession of phases and can never remain in any single phase or be represented by any single phase, that he or she evolves and decays continually, that either the whole cycle must persist or none of it can persist, Steele gradually crumbles down all imaginable conceptions of personal immortality. In a crowning section he sweeps together, in all their vagueness and sentimentality and imaginative poverty, a multitude of descriptions of the Future Life—from the Semitic Paradise and a variety of ancient religious writings and visions to the strange inventions of our modern mediums. It is wonderful how poor in the way of objectives and activities is the content of these future lives. Their appeal to the imagination is extraordinarily feeble. We can indulge in reveries about living at the North Pole or in Mexico or Arabia, but who in reverie has ever lived the Future Life? The imagination fails for sheer lack of nourishment. These personal immortalities, he concludes, are premature and quite futile efforts to satisfy this craving to escape individual death. And they are all inherently unsound, they are fallacious fantasies, bankrupt propositions.

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“One is not dealing here with something that can be considered a matter of opinion. One is dealing with a confusion of thought that dissolves to nothing under a lucid scrutiny.”

But the case, he insists, is very different with his second class of immortalities. He calls these “merger-immortalities.” There one deals with psychological possibilities. If one calls immortality the soul, then, he suggests, it is true that a man may save his soul by losing it. The breaking down of the physical and mental isolation of the self-seeking individual is in accordance with the practices of nature. We see this in all the offspring-cherishing creatures and still more so in the family-forming and social animals. They think nothing of self-sacrifice for the herd or for their young. The mentality such types display is no longer a completely closed system of self-preservation. Even in the lowliest types of men there lie about the central core of the self-conscious self-seeking ego, great systems of personal abandon. There are love loyalties, family loyalties, group loyalties, tribal loyalties. Steele goes on in his sweeping way to declare that all morality, all religious

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theory, amounts psychologically to this, that it is a systemization of the relationship between the self-seeking ego and these outer less egoistic motivations, so that interests far transcending mere individual survival take over the will and consciousness and direct them to ends that go far beyond the limits of the individual life. In these respects man can go off at a tangent from the cycle of the individual life, and that tangent may be produced indefinitely.

So far as a human being transfers his will and hope to those tangential ends, he may, says Steele, escape ultimate frustration. If he can really believe in a deity who lives for ever, or in a nation or an interest, scientific research, for instance, or intellectual progress or what not, which may go on indefinitely, and in so far as he can identify himself with that on-going non-cyclic progressive being in which he believes, he reduces death to secondary importance in his scheme of things. He has found deliverance from "the body of this death."

Steele's examination of the religions that seem to promise the common man an endless personal

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immortality is very acute and searching. The crude promise seems to be made to, and is certainly believed to be made by, the common believer in such religions as Islam and Christianity; but directly one passes from what one may call the street form of the faith, qualifications and ambiguities creep in. Steele cites St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians (Chapter XV) as a typical instance of this disposition to whittle away the crude primary promise. "All flesh is not the same flesh. . . . There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial, but the glory of the celestial is one and the glory of the terrestrial is another. . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead. . . . There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body. . . . Now this I say, Brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. . . ."

Plainly there had been mental troubles at Corinth, and Paul, troubled perhaps himself, deals with them with extreme caution and extremely little confidence.

Directly men above a certain level of intelligence became active in the organization of any religion,

they betrayed their consciousness of the absurdity of crude personal immortality and set themselves to make qualifying statements and mystical interpretations. "Eternity" is a marvellous word in the hands of a good theologian. "What becomes of her immortality when 'time shall be no more' is a matter for Mrs. Bloggs to ponder."

And having shown that the only completely reasonable way in which the individual can escape from the conclusive frustration of death is by merger into some greater being, Steele goes on to a survey and tabulation of the main sorts of these "merger-immortalities." They are of all shapes and sizes, simplicities, complexities, inadequacies and satisfactoriness. They vary with the critical capacity and imaginative powers of the individual. He shows that there is no essential difference between the devotion of patriotism and a religious devotion, that every sort of disinterested preoccupation is a form of escape from the frustration terror, the terror of being left lonely before the advance of inevitable fate. Socialism and especially its exaggeration, communism, stands on a footing of entire psychological equivalence to religion.

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“Service” is an almost empty phrase with the same intention. The sweated worker, the humiliated Christian, the unsuccessful business man, can get away from inferiority and defeat and live triumphant again in his sentiment or his faith.

So the rational way for the intelligent man, assailed and beleaguered by assured individual frustration, is to set himself to discover the completest form of “merger-immortality” available for him and to shape and subordinate his conduct to that.

Is the statement of a *best* merger-immortality possible? Steele asks, with the answer Yes plainly in his mind. He would never, I think, have begun *The Anatomy of Frustration* if that had not been in his mind. Are all the mystic gods and all the great causes and loyalties, only different and imperfect formulæ for some more comprehensive flux of effort and desire into which they can all be melted? Which same common flux in the light of modern knowledge may be even now amenable to a statement broader, simpler, than any hitherto made; a statement which may indeed prove now universally and permanently satisfactory and direc-

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tive. And, as we shall next describe, Steele addresses himself very valiantly to develop his affirmative to that enquiry in his second and part of his third volume.

The Most Comprehensive Immortality

THOSE portions of *The Anatomy of Frustration* which deal with what Steele calls the "Rational Objective of Life," the completest, most satisfying merger-immortality, show him at his most characteristic; he presses on to his end with a curious pertinacity, and it is plain that he means to get to that end. But one feels that so far as he himself is concerned he got to that end with some bold leaps of intuition and a considerable will to get there. He is himself profoundly convinced and his affectation of open-minded enquiry wears at times extremely thin. He believes that there is no truly rational objective, no sound and sure merger-immortality, enduring and practicable and satisfying, for any intelligent human being, except a thorough-going self-identification with the human will and intelligence considered as a synthesis of the will-drives and the mental-drives of the entire species. He rarely writes it Humanity; he writes it Life; but he admits that, outside the human

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range, consciousness of, much less participation in, anything of the sort is negligible.

He evokes this Life Being of his in which every one of us becomes, or can become, a phase of feeling, thrust or decision, he evokes it with such a strength of conviction, he holds it so firmly, that it is difficult to keep in mind how modern and experimental is this general statement of his. Without the biological and psychological thought of the past third of a century it could not have been made.

The only way of escape from ultimate frustration for every living intelligence, the only way that opens a vista that can remain an open vista, lies now through this formula: "I am Life"—or what is practically the same thing, "I am Man."

But this is not a new faith and conception of conduct that replaces outworn and discredited faiths. "A new faith now and thus, and everything wrong before," would be altogether contrary to Steele's line of thought. Nearly everything was right or in the right direction before, but insufficient and prematurely conclusive. He unrolls a vast panorama of all the gods and divine chiefs,

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the mystical interpretations, the causes and devotions, the churches and organizations, the patrias and gangs, the family honour and the caste duty, to which the imagination of man in his fight against the dark flood of loneliness has clung. Steele examines them without impatience. Minds at every stage of development, in every age, have been driven to these types of resort by the same psychological need. From that point of view they are the same thing. The seeking tentacle grips this or that, but it is the same tentacle. And even if the gods are found to be incredible, if they fail the votary in the hour of need, if the dogmas lead to mutual destruction and the devotions become a trap for fruitless self-immolation, that does not end the quest; the demand remains. A multitude of solutions that do not go far enough, nor wide enough, that betray their own unsoundness, is no demonstration of the impossibility of any solution. Put your exploded God in a museum or your illusions in the discard; you will be driven to try again. And so, taking an indication from this source and a phrase from that, Steele, through a sort of *reductio ad absurdum* of all preceding

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finalities, emerges with his own modern solution, which is, to put it simply, self-identification with the whole of life.

That means in conduct that behaviour is shaped so that its main conception is the co-operative rendering and development of experience and the progressive development in the whole race of a co-ordinated will to continue and expand. This gives very clear and definite conceptions of what is right or wrong in the social, economic and political organizations which hold us together. And it gives equally clear indications of what is permissible or unjustifiable in personal behaviour. It takes world-peace and social justice in its stride; it makes world-peace kinetic, a clearance for action, and social justice a scheme not of rights but opportunities.

In expounding this, which he offers as the latest and best of all statements of Immortality, Steele reminds one not a little of Paul on Mars Hill: "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." There is the same confident striving for an immense simplification. I suppose every man who has ever sat down to tell his

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religion to others, has something of the same feeling, that at last he is out of the estuary marshes and channels and making for the sought-for open sea.

“And now,” says Steele, “we can really open up this subject of man’s frustration. For with the broad table-lands of our common human opportunity, widespread and inviting before us, seen plainly, stated clearly, why do we not go on to them, why are we not hurrying towards them, why are we not in fact already there? Why does our species—which is I—which is you—still live in division and confusion? Is this now no more than a temporary state of disorganization, the old confusions still going on, because of the extreme newness of the new ideas, or is the fog (the Mess, the Jungle) a permanent condition of human life? Shall we be for ever a medley of individuals striving to escape from a frustration that will at last close in upon us all?”

For Steele at least the answer was No. He insists that he as Man is the unending Beginner. That a full and happy phase of living as individuals and as a species, is now within our reach—at

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hand. What delays us? What hampers us? These become the master questions in life now, and the Anatomy of Frustration the supreme study for mankind.

Man and the Democratic Misconception

STEELE is very elaborate and explicit about the difference between this self-merger in mankind and the ideas of Modern Democracy. Here again his quotations and references represent an enormous amount of reading. This Undying Man, this Awakening Spirit in Life, with whom we have to identify ourselves, is not the Crowd or any sort of crowd. The Russians, he thinks, may be the last people to cling to the "Mysticism of the Masses." The Mysticism of the Masses—the belief, that is, in a transcendent crowd wisdom—was one of the mental characteristics of the nineteenth century. He quotes with infinite disapproval Lincoln's words that you can fool some of the people all the time and all the people some of the time but that you cannot fool all the people all the time. And he makes a shrewd remark that I have never heard before. Beethoven, he says, crowns his Ninth Symphony with stupendous choral effects, the liberated millions' march to triumph.

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There an age finds expression. To-day no Beethoven, he declares, would culminate with that brawling, swarming, shouting multitudinousness of music. Now the theme would be the clear greatness of the human mind, fearless and masterful, like a new lone star arising among the stars.

Man, when Steele writes it with a capital letter, means not the aggregation but the quintessence of human life.

Art, literature, scientific work, achievement of every sort, are the growing consciousness of life through man, they are the dawn of unending life to which we must give ourselves to escape frustration. "When I write of democracy in a favourable sense," he says, "I intend no more and no less than this, that every human being shall have the right and shall be given all the opportunity that can be given, to contribute to human achievement just as far as his or her will and power go. Privileges of birth, advantages of wealth, race barriers, are sins against this democratic reality. Nevertheless the lopsided man with his special exaggeration of our normal creative gifts is entitled to all the material resources and freedoms his gifts

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require. We are all unequal in scale and quality. For some of us, our identification with this or that aspect of Man the deathless, can be more extensive than for most of us. But that justifies no exterior distinction.

This "Man" in whom all the best in every one of us participates is to be thought of neither as an individual being nor as the species considered collectively. He is a super individuality (not a super individual N.B.) arising out of the species. He is the sum of human knowledge and expression, the sustaining consciousness, the reasonable will of the race. This conception of Man, Steele points out, though it is comparatively modern in its phraseology, has been growing more and more definite through the ages. This is the Super Man of modern thought, but it is also, he argues, the Superior Individual of Confucius. And then he begins to rout about in mystical literature and particularly among the Christian and Moslem mystics. He is very plausible—although a finer note of scholarship would make him more convincing—in his attempt to persuade us that myriads of contemplative souls through the ages have been

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travelling by roundabout journeys from remote groves and temples and the worship of gods of wood and stone, towards the same realizations.

“This real immortality,” Steele throws out, “need not be assumed emotionally and as a feat of faith. It may be accepted drily and humorously as the strange wry truth of things. It is possible to have undevout believers; it is possible to have service combined with a vivid hatred of hymn-singing.”

Suicide, the Acceptance of Frustration

A CURIOUS thing about this work we are epitomizing here, is that there runs through it, as a sort of shadow to Steele's bright insistence on the limitlessness and sufficiency of Man, an undercurrent of defeatism. The antithesis to finding salvation in a supreme merger-immortality is, he feels, suicide. If you cannot lift yourself to be Life invincible and immortal, then you must accept frustration. You must live in a succession of stimulations and new excitements, live for the day, and when these sustaining accidents begin to fail you or you yourself fail to respond to them, then there is nothing before you but sloth and apathy, accidie, which is a lingering suicide, or suicide, plain, short and direct.

Whatever our private judgment on the circumstances of Steele's death may be, there can be no question that he approached the idea of suicide as the one open alternative to systematic aggressive living.

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He never brought together all his notes upon this idea; they remain mostly unprinted among his residual papers, and I mention them here because here seems the right place to note and dismiss them. "Suicide," he writes, in one pencilled memorandum, "may be represented very attractively as a proud and passionate refusal to drink the cup to the dregs. You 'walk out' as they say in the film world. You admit the triumphant evil in things, their essential, fundamental hopelessness, but you add that you yourself will never be made to endure it. 'Your head is bloody' and you strut out as proudly as admitted defeat will let you, refusing to suffer further.

"Or you may be overwhelmed by the realization of your own ineffectiveness. 'I see the great game at last,' you say, 'in all its fullness, and it is too great for me.' You are no good at all. So you throw yourself into the discard."

However gallant a face we put upon it, suicide remains a petulant acceptance of final frustration. We may spit in the face of defeat but for all that we are defeated, and the assertion of our will in this last poor defiance, whatever gloss of pride we

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may put upon it, is in the nature of desertion from the fighting ranks. While there is life there is conflict, and whatever failures we have made or whatever losses we have sustained, it is still possible to go on with the fight, even though it be on a smaller scale and at a greater disadvantage. So to the very end, if we resist the temptation to a suicidal abandonment of the game of life, and go down fighting, we remain part of the immortal effort.

We must remember that Steele was an ill man with a depressing poison in his blood. It is the more to his credit that he kept his valiant intellectual flag against frustration, flying for so long. And in one place there is this interesting passage standing by itself.

“A man may be killed as surely by internal as external accidents. Suicide as a logical end to life may be an act of careful premeditation, it may be a weighed and willed truncation of living, and by the standard I have unfolded that is, so to speak, a sin, but for many of us suicide may be lurking to take us by surprise. You may go out without your philosophy one day, as a man goes out into a jungle without his gun, and encounter a conspiracy

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of accidents and treacherous endocrines as one might meet a hungry pack of wolves. There are such things as insupportable times when the thought of going on to the end is unendurable torture. Against such mischances no one is absolutely secure, and such a suicide should not be counted too heavily against the previous faith and way of living of a generally resolute man. The best one can do is to train oneself to keep one's courage in the forefront of one's mind, to cling to courage, to wear the habitual practice of courage like a private amulet.

“Live on to the end through the bitterness you dread, and you may find it is not so bitter, and as for death itself you may be sure of one thing, which is that your consciousness will never arrive at death but only at a dissolution into the unconscious. There is no awareness of one's own death. Your death never happens in your consciousness. You have gone. It happens to the people about you.”

Man on his Planet: What does he Desire?

HAVING devoted two volumes and a part of the third to persuading himself and his readers that the confused and baffling multiplicity of man's general ideas and general purposes and intentions, men's philosophies, their religions, their patriotisms and devotions, is something "essentially temporary," something magnificently incidental, "an adaptive phase of a few thousand years that is plainly now coming to its completion in an expansion of the individual consciousness to the dimension of planetary life," Steele has the ground cleared for his large-scale study of the closing years (or centuries maybe?) of man's Age of Frustration, before the era of knowledge and power opens out.

In reading him we have to bear in mind certain very characteristic habits of thought that pervade his arguments. Chief of these is this mystical identification of the personal self (Steele or you or me or anyone) with "Man" and with "Life."

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There are odd expressions of his that need to be weighed and assimilated if his attitude is to be fully apprehended. "The individuality is the handle end of all life," he writes in one place. In another he says: "Since every individual is also Man, an integral thread of human thought and purpose, he cannot, once he has arrived at a realization of that, concede his responsibility for the whole world to any priest, leader, dictator, king or whatnot. He may have done so beforehand in ignorance, as dogs or horses do, but after he has once seen the light in this matter subservience is degradation. He has adjusted himself to an immortal collaboration and he cannot divest himself any more of responsibility. The universe has been given him." There are definite intimations that Steele considered that a sort of "Illumination" was coming to mankind and also that it came—almost in the fashion of the theologian's "conversion"—to individual persons. After "Illumination," the individual is different and the world is different.

There are times when Steele seems to be presenting nothing but a sort of *réchauffé* or quintessence (you may chose either word) of

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religious mysticism throughout the ages. This "Illumination" of his, is clearly little more or little less than being "born again." Men have been trying to realize that second birth for nineteen centuries. Where the trouble has crept in has been in the trailing question, "Born again to what?" Where Steele seems to be novel, is in the realism and completeness with which he presents the world of new values and strenuous thinking and effort opened out to the Illuminated.

Rejecting, as he does, the time-honoured distinction between matter and spirit as a profound fallacy "ingrained in language," he is able to state his conception of our objective, the New Life, in terms at once extremely mental and extremely concrete. He cannot slide away into "other-worldism" as the dualists do. He contemplates a world so unified, so understanding, so clarified and harmonized, that its advancing welfare and the vigour and happiness of its individuals reflect and complement each other. "We shall live in the All and the All will live in each of us."

He writes that sentence, reflects and anticipates a criticism. "Am I saying something there that is

still concrete, or am I walking more and more dangerously along a rhetorical plank above an abyss of nonsense?" He reflects that "every effort at extreme definition is apt by its sheer intensity to thrust through exaggeration towards absolute and therefore contentless statements. Language is all too apt to *oversay*," and with that he drops the subject for a while. But he means to return to it from another angle. He admits and calls attention to the fact that he has oversaid what he has to say, and there for a time, until he can prepare an approach from a different angle, he leaves that discussion. It remains—oversaid.

Next he sets himself to present in considerable detail the possible world community towards which life is thrusting now, the sort of All in which the individual is to live. Just as in his big first volume he made a very respectable attempt to get all the gods and philosophies of mankind into one great boiling, so in this third volume he gets together a very impressive mass of Utopias, revolutionary plans, reconstruction plans, social criticisms, and does what he can to make an extract that shall be the quintessence of the desire

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behind all this discontent, all this hope and scheming for change. He rejects what he calls "mere envy and vindictiveness systems," mere reversals of conditions by which the mighty are to be laid low and the humble and meek exalted, and he concentrates on substantial proposals. His purpose is to find what is wanting positively, what is wanted positively.

He makes a shrewd criticism of Utopias generally. They do not, he points out, investigate what is desired by men; they assume—often very rashly—what is desired by men, they leave that unstated and implicit, and merely set about showing us ingenious ways by which these unformulated ends are to be attained.

But if we read between the lines, we can nevertheless bring out from the implicit to the explicit in this *mélange* of projects and dreams, the real ends which are "commonly acceptable to the human imagination." That is as much unanimity as he feels is possible for any human beings and it is as much as he requires. Impulses purely personal and anti-social will always, he admits, be flaring out in human conduct. That does not matter so

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far as a general statement of purpose goes. If such impulses can be kept to individual limitations and prevented from running over into contagion and social complication, they will by their very diversity and discordance neutralize each other. When he says what is "generally desired" by men, he means no more than this, "what *most* men, *most of the time*, if the thing is put to them, will agree should be achieved and which they will even profess themselves willing to assist in achieving."

From this he goes on to find the most general formula for the common desire.

Freedom, Steele begins, if you use the word broadly, is the primary desire of living things. Almost all that they desire, either individually or in common, can be expressed as a freedom, as an escape from a limitation. When they want Peace it is really freedom from the intense preoccupation and danger of war. When they want Plenty it is freedom from the irksomeness of want and toil. When they obey, it is to relieve themselves of the immediate penalties of compulsion. When they dance or drill or sing or shout in unison it is to free themselves from the lonely conspicuousness

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of initiative, the essential agoraphobia. "Men will only willingly place themselves under the discipline of organized effort in order to remain, in some nearer and more essential respect, free." This is a fundamental paradox in the structure of human communities. We consent to a common social order in order to preserve our freedoms, just as on the wider basis of religious conduct we dissolve ourselves into merger-immortalities in order to save our souls alive.

Steele becomes apologetic for reminding us of things so plainly before our eyes. But they are so constantly as well as so plainly before us that, for the most part and for most of the time, we forget that they are there. We let our essentially negative and freedom-protecting impulses clothe themselves for the purposes of collective action in positive forms. We seek something only to escape something. It is well to be reminded at times of the primary egotism at the bottom of all our search for a merger-immortality that shall include practically all mankind. Our search for a "common maximum freedom" runs parallel, at its own level, to our search for the "most comprehensive

immortality." "It is almost as if I repeated myself here," he says, "but it is not an exact repetition. It is a parallel at another level. It is a very important second statement of the human objective in a different phraseology. It is absolutely necessary to any solution of the problem of frustration to correct such a glib and mystical overstatement as "Each in All and All in Each," by this admission that the world commonweal we have in mind is a compromise of freedoms, a deal for a maximum general freedom at the expense of unregulated individual self-assertion, something, in short, as individualistic as the Social Contract of Rousseau. So put, it is an understatement. It presents the business as a bargain instead of as a mystical self-abnegation, exalted and profound. "The subtle veracity quivers broadly and mercurially between that overstatement and this understatement."

"The subtle veracity quivers broadly and mercurially between that overstatement and this understatement," between merger-immortality and the mystic swallowing up of the ego in an undying purpose, on the one hand, and the social contract on the other. This is Steele at his most

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characteristic. He is an adept of *chiaro-oscuro* in philosophical statement. Having thrown this paradoxical quality over his discussion, he feels able to go on to his detailed study of our general frustration. Through the shimmer of a varying idiom he is able to make his vision appear sometimes the vision of a prophet and sometimes the flattest of commonsense. It is—to vary the image—stereoscopic, this double style—and to my mind at any rate it exposes his subject rounded and living as no hard, consistent terminology and logical idiom could do.

We can now go a step further in our examination of the general desire of mankind.

Man desires peace upon his planet. He desires release from the perpetual anxiety of impending violence, compulsion, conscription, discipline, effort, destruction, waste and death, which the organisation of his affairs into war-making societies and states involve. And he lives now in a world in which peace and a general release from these obsessions could plainly be attained and secured by the practical fusion of the foreign offices of quite a few "Great Powers" in the world. Every

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main line and structure of a World Pax has been thought out and projected. There is no other method of peace. The plans for an eternal world peace have been convincingly sketched in outline by hundreds of thinkers and writers. The deepening horror of the alternatives to such a settlement, the horror of air-warfare, gas-warfare, the habitual practice of treacheries and cruelties, social disorganization, economic dislocation, social and biological degrading has been made plain to the general imagination. Peace ballots and such-like canvassing of the popular mind show an explicit realization of the situation. For all that we prepare steadily for war and drift towards war. Yet there is the desire. There is the broad conception of a method for its satisfaction. Why is it frustrated? There can be no other answer than that for all its wide distribution that desire for peace is too weak, too discontinuous and too incoordinated for the adverse impulses.

Moreover, man desires plenty, which again has become now—whatever the conditions of economic life may have been in the past—a reasonable and feasible desire. He desires release from preoccupa-

tion with sordid needs, anxieties and uncongenial toil. There is the completest justification for that desire. The thing could be arranged. Whatever may have been the case in the past it is now a commonplace that "men starve in the midst of potential plenty." And they go on starving! We have had the possibility of economic abundance and the necessity of a World Pax plainly before us for two whole generations at least, and we have scarcely budged a step towards their realization in spite of that world-wide desire.

And having reiterated these commonplaces of our time, Steele opens out what is destined to become the ruling thought of most of the rest of the "Anatomy." It is that motives are things of deeper origin than intellectual convictions and that the real will of *Homo sapiens* is still largely unaffected by his conscious and formulated wishes. His intentions are one thing; his behaviour quite another. The world's expressed desire, its conscious desire, is such and such; the total complex of human impulses is quite another system, darker, deeper and profoundly more real. These desires for world unity and sane economics are conscious

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and intellectual desires, he says, and they scarcely penetrate at all into that more primitive and substantial mental mass which is the true reservoir of motives and impulses. It is only in its lucid conscious region that the mind of man has yet apprehended his new conditions. The unspoken is far more potent than the spoken. Our religions, our philosophies, our creeds and faiths and loyalties, float unsubstantially upon these inarticulate and potent realities of our lives. The latter affect and confuse and frustrate the former. They split them up; they misdirect and misapply them; they sterilize them. The reciprocal action of the former has still to be made effective.

Unless that can be done complete frustration lies before mankind. . . .

*Frustration by the Sub-Conscious.
What Morality is*

As the work proceeds, it becomes evident that the voluminous opening volumes of *The Anatomy of Frustration* are designed very largely to clear away mists and clouds of possible misconception coming in from the theological and philosophical side, mists and clouds that would otherwise have embarrassed Steele in his main enquiry. This enquiry, he now makes plain, is a study of the struggle of those ideas which, however much they may be distorted and disguised, he has proved to his own satisfaction are the gist of all our religious, social and political desires: (1) Self-merger in a world order, (2) participation in an unending research and adventure, and (3) the attainment of a personal, shared and re-echoed happiness—the struggle of these threefold desires against frustration by that dark undertow of unformulated or disguised impulses which still supplies a great part, and possibly the

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greater part, of the directive force of human conduct.

So the next phase in the Anatomy of Frustration is a political, economic and social psycho-analysis both of the individual and of the specific man (overman) of which the individual is a specimen and part. It is a correlation of one's declared purpose with one's real behaviour and of our collective protestations with our community activities.

There is nothing partizan or doctrinaire in Steele's use of the generalizations of psycho-analysis. He follows no "master," he belongs to no "school." He draws upon Freud or Adler or Jung as it suits him, and he finds no necessity to adjudicate precisely upon their differences. He treats their terminology, not as an exact scientific vocabulary, but as an accumulation of penetrating and inspiring metaphors which illuminate rather than define. The psycho-analysts have opened our eyes to the artificiality of our rationalized conceptions of ourselves and our social relations; and that for Steele is the supreme importance of psycho-analysts. They have penetrated below the

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level of conscious conduct (formal conduct) into an underlying structure of response, impulse and inhibitions, and brought their conclusions within hailing distance of the study of animal behaviour from the purely physiological side (Pavloff. e.g.). They have made the relations of formal (intentional) conduct to actual behaviour clear as they were never clear before.

And in accordance with his endorsement of the generalizations of psycho-analysis, Steele delivers his attack upon frustration along two different lines and at two different levels. One is an intellectual attack, a close examination, a scrutiny, of the relations between our rational conscious scheme of intentions and the unlit drives of behaviour below, of which we are only now becoming clearly aware. He makes an attempt to illuminate and explore that dark underworld of psychic reality with a view to its penetration by consciousness. And the second part of Steele's attack consists in practical applications of the ideas exposed and clarified by this intellectual attack. He attempts to animate these concepts with will—and that will also, he realizes, has to be drawn

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from the rich resources of the shadowed world below.

The essential purpose of all law, all discipline, all training, he says, is the enthronement of a clear general purpose above a subjugated and directed subconsciousness. The purpose of education is to anticipate insurgences from below the conscious level and so escape self-frustration. Education has a social and an individual side; it can be considered from the point of view either of the whole or of the unit, but its objective in each case is the same, the control of dividing, contradictory and dissipating impulses. No religion, no philosophy, is of any value unless it implies a complete ethic and educational purpose, and no ethics or education can have the slightest value without a clearly-defined foundation in general philosophy.

Incidentally, Steele devotes some passages of unrestrained contempt to what he calls the "natural virtue" schools of such educational "progressives" as Neill and his associates. Education, Steele dogmatizes, is a mental readjustment, it is essentially a release from instinctive inhibitions and a restraint upon instinctive impulses.

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"I live in an age," says Steele, "when my assertion that morality is the dominating frame within which behaviour must be constrained, will not be very acceptable. The present is a phase of greatly relaxed conduct, people have probably never 'let themselves go' to such an extent as they do to-day; there are people who exalt such spontaneity almost to the level of a principle of action. The reader may be more or less infected by such suggestions and so loth to agree that the way out from the confused frustrations and intensifying dangers of the present, lies through the imposition of a moral system of laws controlling conduct, more detailed and penetrating than any that have been observed before."

Yet we are not without evidence that the prevalent impatience with discipline is tempered in many instances by a craving for stringent rules. There is agoraphobia in the normal make-up; men can be afraid of their own freedom. The adhesions that constitute the beginnings and essential vitality of such organizations as the Communists, the Fascists and the Nazis manifest a spontaneous recoil from chaotic living. The instinctive desire for

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freedom in the normal human being is balanced against a real desire, which may even become a passionate desire, for consistent collectively effective living.

The latter desire may or may not be linked with the rationalizing process or with the prolongation of infantile subservience into social feeling or with both—Steele does not argue that out or get to any very clear definitions about it—but this craving for consistency is plainly a less primitive and universal urgency than the instinct for freedom. Regulations may come and go in human affairs but insubordination and rebellion go on for ever.

Then, illustrating his case by a voluminous array of instances, Steele indulges in one of these paradoxical arguments which are so characteristic of his thought. The present enfeeblement of authoritative moral injunctions, he declares, is due to our increasingly urgent need for them. Outworn codes do not work, makeshifts will not work, and we are impatient with their futile restraints. Confronted with conditions that are continually increasing in complexity and scope, we find the systems of morality and justice that were

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good enough in the cruder past, no help to us at all. It is not that we have abandoned morality but that morality, as it has been understood hitherto, has broken down under us. It is not sound enough nor extensive enough. It has not developed with our need for it.

This is something that cannot be too loudly and frequently asserted. Among the multitudes of people who are "going lax" in the modern community, there are numbers of others who are trying, often quite desperately and violently, to get back to some real or imagined ancient virtue. They "lunge backwards" at morality. "Duty and Discipline" movements, Fascisms and so forth are saturated with this impulse towards a convulsive revivalism. They are harsh because they are intensely urgent. The strain of artificial effort, the fear of not "holding it," release deep founts of cruelty. These discipline and obedience movements are misguided and hysterically harsh, but there they are. They are natural responses to an imperfectly apprehended necessity.

Steele compares these reactionary moral movements to people who are taking to the boats from

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a sinking liner and then, terrified by the roughness of the seas about them, fight to go back to the doomed yet comforting hull they have voyaged in so long. Every age of enforced change has these phases of moral panic, and he cites a score of authorities from Tacitus onward, to show parallelisms in the Roman breakdown.

From such pseudo-scholarly exercises Steele turns to make a vehement onslaught on the "barbaric" moralities of the past and in particular on the Ten Commandments. As a moral basis, he declares, these last are fantastically inadequate. The respect with which they were treated by the teachers of our youth has warped our judgment about them. We see them transfigured in the pyrotechnics of Sinai. We dare not see how limited and silly they are. As a basis for a working modern morality these stone tablets, relics of the Stone Age, are "about as much good as a nursery rhyme or any other folk-lore fossil."

As a beginning for righteous economic behaviour, for example, "Thou shalt not steal," he declares, is hardly more helpful than "Simple Simon met a pieman, coming to the fair." The latter jingle

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indeed does “put a certain debatable stress upon the importance of a cash guarantee before delivery.”

He quotes a passage from the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly here to show the way in which avarice, acquisitiveness and hardness can be poured into these empty injunctions:

Q. 73. Which is the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment is, Thou shalt not steal.

Q. 74. What is required in the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.

Q. 75. What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever doth or may unjustly hinder our own or our neighbour's wealth or outward estate.

Steele makes a jumble of posers to illustrate the difficulties of a modern man anxious to do well, anxious to play his part as a helpful cog-wheel in the human ensemble, faced by the solemn insuffi-

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ciencies of our open lattice of laws and sentiments and moral "imperatives." "Imperatives" he puts in inverted commas and so cocks a snook at Kant. What do the Ten Commandments tell a man about doing good work for low rates or selling specious bad work on a rising market? May he speculate in staple supplies? May he corner necessities? What have the Ten Commandments to say about veracity in salesmanship — about revealing unsuspected defects to an unwary buyer? Have they a word of reproach or approval for the miser? Is a voter right to consider his private interests at the polling booth? What is a man's whole duty to his children? Must he pay taxes to an upstart government? When is he justified, or is he ever justified, in resisting the law? Is a life spent mainly in sport better or worse than one spent in scientific research? What are we to do about passive resistance to warfare—or about passive resisters? And so he goes on in a sweeping survey of the endless "open questions" of our time.

What *good*, cries Steele, in a sort of refrain after each "open question," are your old Ten Commandments for that?

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Modern conduct now is hardly more than unsystematized casuistry; much is pure wantonness without an attempt at excuse. You may supplement the vast inadequacies of your code with pious sentiments, nice formless sentiments, "things of the spirit," that will not have the ghost of a chance against the subconscious drives they will attempt to control. "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you," he quotes and asks: What sort of form may that not take in the actions of a man untrained in veracity and self-criticism? It is just playing a confidence trick upon yourself and others. It assumes you have the immense imaginative power needed to reverse your rôle. And in an unjust situation what you do to a man and what he would like you to do to him may both be thoroughly wrong.

How can our modern world escape frustration, he asks, when great masses of people think they can shape a satisfactory scheme of conduct on such antiquated, patched-up and entirely insufficient standards? It is like hoping to carry a torrent of motor traffic along a mountain mule track. But how can we have anything much better than our

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present collection of antiques and makeshifts, until we sit down and work out the conception of the duties and reciprocities of a social organization with at least as much thoroughness as that with which the parts and purposes of an engine or an industrial plant are worked out? Or to choose perhaps a better simile, how can we know whether a part of a living body is functioning properly or needs treatment and correction, until we have something like an idea of the general physiological process?

From which survey of our moral confusion and distress, our inability to impose any systematic direction of conduct upon the impulses from the subconscious that drive us, Steele presently emerges in his own fashion, with the explanation that all this is inevitable in a state of social readjustment like the present. The old order of a patchwork of states and communities dissolves all about us—their morality dissolving with them—and until the new world order becomes plain before us, we must, whether we like it or not, flounder for want of a moral code in a wasteful and dangerous miscellany of motives. Humanity is in labour and

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will be worse before it is better. A modernized moral code and a world social organization are reciprocal and you cannot have one without the other.

Steele holds on tenaciously to these propositions. A moral code implies a conception of social organization, it will vary as that conception varies, and before you can rescue the sum of human conduct from its present futility, you must have a definite picture of an effective organized world society. Your moral code can be definite only as that picture is definite. If you really mean to have a World Pax, for example, you must have a guiding conception of the directorate through which collective action will be determined in the world. That is to say, you must have a lucid conception of a political goal and of the methods and activities that will attain it. Then and only then can you determine the loyalties and restraints demanded by proper political conduct. And if you mean seriously to realize that universal ease and plenty which beyond all question is physically possible to-day, you must have ready a clear explicit plan of a productive system and a money-property

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system within which the freedom of the individuality can be preserved and its incurable amour-propre respected, while the collective welfare and continuing progress are ensured. It is quite impossible to define right or wrong, what is stealing and what is economic duty, until this is done. You must know how payments will be made, how far proprietorship may go, what will be the provisions of the implicit social contract on which that system works. "Formless honesty," formless good conduct, constitute a contradiction in terms.

And having propounded these statements, Steele, with the same valiant assurance he displayed in his earlier volumes when he asserted that a common human desire and purpose can be revealed beneath the verbiage and misunderstandings of theology and philosophy, now sets himself to state in general terms, the common conceptions of that World Pax and social justice which he is convinced are to be found, implied, masked, mis-stated and ineffective, in the multifarious and apparently contradictory political efforts and formulæ of the present age.

The Frustration of Socialism

ONE of Steele's most frequent words, used always in a condemnatory sense in his discussion of human relationships, is "piecemeal." We are always, he says, trying to detach questions from complicating issues and work them out. We make them manageable and calculable by making them over-simple. That may be helpful at times, provided we do not mistake a convenient step in thought for a final and practical conclusion. No doubt there was a certain justification for the classical mathematical problem about the logs and the elephant's task, in which the solver was permitted to "neglect the weight of the elephant," but no practical end was possible until the weight of the elephant was brought in. In our social and political discussions there are neglected elephants everywhere. We are all in a state of "flustered dogmatism" because of the unacknowledged presence of these exasperating animals.

This piecemeal habit leads inevitably to a still

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more objectionable feature of such discussions, "assumptions and implications." He is always denouncing "tacit assumptions" and "unwarranted, unconfessed and often unsuspected implications." They are as silly and mischievous as the questions-begging "reservations" dear to diplomats. He is very emphatic that we cannot discuss money without a general theory of property, that we cannot discuss property without a general theory of economic organization, that we cannot discuss economic organization without a general political and social ideal, and that we cannot have a general political and social ideal without a comprehensive conception of human ecology.

"There exists now a general history of our kind in time and space, and a generally acceptable statement of the conditions within which that history has unfolded. All social and political reasoning is useless unless it accepts that history. It is impossible to deal with these questions hopefully and practically until that history is accepted as their framework."

To-day we, as a species, are thoroughly at cross purposes, mainly because we will not go back to

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fundamentals but will persist in beginning anywhere in the air at our own sweet will and so doom ourselves to disagreement. That is why so much of our discussion about money, for example, in spite of our realization of its urgency and importance, seems so infinitely wearisome, futile and silly. And why most of it is saturated with an almost Marxian bad temper and bad manners.

"I assume the world community," says Steele, "subject to general ecological laws. I cannot discuss money and property in relation to any more restricted community. I have massed my reasons for doing that and I cannot see why so many people who deal with finance and economics generally, evade and ignore this necessary foundation assumption. Everybody you trade with or plunder or pay tribute to or even set barriers against is, if only as a pressure from outside, in your economic community and has to be brought into your scheme. It is a pedantic imbecility to ignore that."

You cannot have a property-money system by itself—leading a life of its own—any more than you can have a heart and circulation leading a life of its own. You cannot begin at the City or the

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Treasury or the ghetto and its practices, as primary. The circulatory system depends upon all the other organs in the animal to which it belongs and upon the scale and extent of the entire creature. The circulatory system of a crayfish is quite different from that of an oyster or that of a man. The property-money system of an isolated island or a hidden kingdom can have only the remotest resemblances to that of a wide trading world empire. The property-money system of a state striving to realize a communist formula is necessarily different fundamentally from that of an autocracy or an individualistic democracy. The whole and the parts belong together and are one.

“Which,” says Steele, “is why I have devoted my earlier volumes to establishing the statement that the world community organized for general plenty and a maximum of individual freedom, is the only rational objective before humanity if the species is to escape frustration. That framework statement determines all my subsequent discussions. I judge all existing methods and institutions by the extent to which they serve as experiences or obstructions on the way to that. An objective

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must be stated and the course held to it. A practical man must begin in that way and he can begin in no other. Before everything else I want these accumulations and digests of mine to be of practical value.”

He goes on to a further exposure of this current vice of “habitual piecemeal thinking.” It is, he declares—and proves it by a vast chapter of quotations—one of the strangest things in the history of Socialism that for the better part of a hundred years, socialists have advocated the most drastic alterations and limitations of the conventions of property and have refused persistently to face the complications of their problem, due, *firstly*, to the rôle of money and monetary manipulation in abstracting and liquidating ownership and bilking the worker through the varying value of his pay, and, *secondly*, to the impossibility of expropriating private individuals or modifying the current tradition and methods of production and distribution without a concurrent development of a new type and a new morality of administration. Socialism, says Steele, never produced a trustworthy coin for the worker, or a “competent

receiver'' for expropriated capital. The nearest approach to a new money that the Socialist movement ever made in its long hundred years of mentally evasive incubation, was the Labour Notes of Robert Owen—after which it dropped the subject altogether—and the nearest thing to an administrative organization it ever evolved was the Communist Party. This was essentially a revolutionary organization, a conspiracy, secretive and quasi-criminal. It was more so, Steele thinks, than it need have been. It was an organization quite unfitted for the candid control of a great modernized community, and to this day the government of the Russian republics, in spite of the lingering hope and enthusiasm of their first release, is dark and conspiratorial in its character, because of the complete inadequacy of the positive conceptions of Marxism, and because of the consequent drift towards the disingenuous intrigue and stagnation of a political oligarchy.

And while Piecemeal-Socialism projected a new sort of society without a new sort of head or a new sort of circulation, the discursive human intelligence, in its subconscious realization of

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these two deficiencies, was also busy producing collateral but disconnected monetary projects, and a series of rough experiments in directive control, such impatient, cruel and incalculable gang tyrannies, for example, as the Fascist and Nazi organizations.

Why did Socialism never round off and complete its proposals? Why did it leave these things to go wrong? It began with a real magnificence. It started with the bravest intimations of a new world order; it was the inspiring idea, the creative hope of a century. Hundreds of thousands of lively minds made incalculable sacrifices, toiled and risked death in the hope of bringing about socialism; until at last that long parturition culminated in the birth of this obdurate Eastern monster without eyes or ears. Why did it happen like that? asks Steele. Why did Socialism persist in incompleteness and end in an abortion?

The answer, Steele thinks, lies partly in the exigencies of militant propaganda. Socialism went into action from its beginning; it was put forward as a complete project long before it had had any chance of maturing. It was rushed into a premature

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offensive by impatient and short-sighted men. This necessitated vulgarization and simplification; complexities had to be ignored and difficulties denied. It had to be made easy for the beginner. It had to be made plausible. It had to produce catchwords and slogans. It had to lock up its brains in its campaign. "You stop thinking," Steele throws out, "when you begin the hunt for disciples." And after a time these strategic suppressions, these deliberate avoidances, became sacred, became orthodox.

The impatience of the careerist mingled with the impatience of the wholesale proselytizer in this early fixation of Socialism. Energetic men to whom the normal channels of ambition were denied, wanted to cut a figure in a new revolutionary drive. They perceived the attractiveness of the suggestions of the Socialist formulæ, and they wanted to exploit that attractiveness with an uncomplicated directness. There were to be no poor and no one at a disadvantage. What more need be said in an age of universal suffrage? To qualify or criticize was enfeeblement of effort, sabotage, downright treachery. It would mean

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having to wait and reconsider instead of getting on.

The long chapter which Steele calls "The Quintessence of Socialist Biography" is a quiet lake of pure vitriol. He never lapses into invective; he prefers juxtaposition to comment. He takes life after life, personality after personality, restricting himself largely to quotations from the spoken words of the poor galaxy of premature "leaders" that Socialism has evoked, or to the dreadful naked succession of facts in their careers. He dips them into his tranquil acid and they come out shrivelled and black. He has something like kindness for Robert Owen and a slightly ironical approval for John Stuart Mill. A very honest man, he says, and then adds, almost as if he were thinking aloud, "if he had been a hen he would have laid a small very good egg, very carefully and precisely, about once a year." He is amused by the decorator-socialists, "Morris and Co.," slighting to civil service socialists and gay with the "antic-socialists." His treatment both of the French and German socialists is very superficial; he seems not to have read them with any thoroughness and to have thought of them with scanty respect. The nearest

approach to a socialist hero, the man who wilts least in the solvents of his scrutiny, curiously enough, is Friedrich Engels. But Engels benefits by having Karl Marx as his foil. His is a moral rather than an intellectual rehabilitation. To Marx, Steele is merciless, but then, after a few brief years of delusion, a whole world which overrated Marx is now finding him out—the essential snobbishness of his hatred of the bourgeoisie, the pretentious crudity of his social psychology, the hocus-pocus of his “dialectic” and the phantasmal nature of his “proletariat.”

For the reader familiar with English politics, Steele’s survey of the rise and decline of British Socialism makes interesting if uncomfortable reading. It is a pitiless scrutiny of mental shirking and secondary motives, and it loses nothing of its effectiveness because of the apparent charity of Steele’s deliberate style. He devotes particular attention to Ramsay Macdonald, because his life spans the whole story of political socialism from dawn to twilight. He is made the demonstration rabbit to show how a great hope may be frustrated. He is stewed gently in the eulogies of the loyal

and devoted Mary Agnes Hamilton, blended carefully with quotations from his later speeches; he is stewed without ebullition and he is stewed to very dismal rags.

Philip Snowden, who became Viscount Snowden, who took an innocent pride in his knowledge of "finance," is examined, so to speak, in monetary science. His early appearance as the "sea green incorruptible" of the British Labour revolution is recalled, the vigour of his rhetoric, his grim integrity. "His speciality was virtuous indignation and, since you cannot think indignantly, he preferred not to think at all." His incompetence in the face of the gold standard crisis of 1931 was fantastic; it was barer and plainer than Macdonald's because by nature and intention he was, in comparison with Macdonald, an honest—or to be more precise—an unsubtle man. The elementary relations of inflation and deflation to debtor and creditor, to rent, interest and worker, had plainly never entered the narrow field of Snowden's political philosophy. The empirical superficiality of his autobiography is unbroken by a gleam of creative understanding. He justifies

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himself; he distributes blame; he does not suspect that he need apologize for the poverty of his thought.

From these two leading cases, Steele goes on to a sort of expanded catalogue of all the chief socialists who "exploited human hope" during the phase of opportunity for Socialism. He quotes their heroic utterances, their magnificently glowing promises of a reconstructed world, and sets beside them their practical abandonments, their lapses into petty worldliness. All sorts of weaknesses come to light in this litany of leaders, but their common fault was the fact that they knew nothing substantial about the Socialism they professed; their studies of social theory seem to have amounted to intermittent attempts on quiet Sunday afternoons to read Ruskin and Marx; they had never explored, much less had they ever admitted, a difficulty, they had just taken Socialism as their convenient banner, nailed it to the mast and forgotten about it up there.

These are not cases for denunciation, Steele insists. Macdonald did not say to himself, "I will choose this plausible stuff as my profession of faith,

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because of its immense appeal to the disadvantaged, who constitute the great majority of voters. I will throw a great wealth of sympathy into my advocacy for I, too, am disadvantaged. I will clamber thereby to a position of political prominence. I will attack the orthodoxy of every rival, explaining that mine is the one true socialism. When I have concentrated the hope and support of the organized disinherited upon myself, I will then sell myself handsomely for the honours and powers of the dominant class. I will taste those social delights, that glittering distinction, I covet and can obtain in no other way. I shall leave the poor revolutionary dreamers who have trusted me, broken and defeated, but what of that? Those radical organizations into which I throw myself for my own advancement, from the I.L.P. to the 1917 Club, will all be discarded in their turn. Gratifications are gratifications and men forget, and are there not always souls born to admire, who will explain me back to a belief in my own greatness?"

Macdonald schemed no doubt, but never to that extent. That conception of a new world order which inspired his youth, passed insensibly into

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mere platform patter. That glorious vision of a world set free from economic servitude, because it was not being continually refreshed by argued criticism with his fellows, because it was insidiously sapped by the immense egotism, the vanities, envies, resentments and compensatory interpretations of his secretive unconscious self, lost colour, lost reality. He never really thought about or into Socialism, once he had adopted it as an attractive label. He had other desires more urgent in him.

“Let anyone who is without sin among you cast the first stone,” quotes Steele abruptly. “I am not throwing stones at these straying pioneers to the socialist utopia. What is the good of throwing stones at them? Nothing can ever bring them back. They are lost men. I am just picking up a few stones and turning them over in my hand—not casting them at all. They are not missiles; they are road metal. I note, because I am obliged to note, the surface of that slanting road down which Socialism stumbled to its present frustrations. . . .”

So from his full, compact and vivid account of the decline and fall of socialist hope, Steele

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emerges with a reiteration of his essential thesis, that we need to evoke a conception of the new world far completer than any conception of a future we have hitherto had, that without a general conception of this new world it is impossible to conduct ourselves properly so as either to bring it about or live rightly in it when it is attained. It is no good to pretend, as the Communists did, that you have only to clear away one "system," the Thing that Is—the Capitalist System or what you will—in order to find another and better one ready-made underneath. That is just "the damnable legacies of Rousseau and Hegel."

There is nothing underneath any social structure but a site. Every social order is a complex of artificial arrangements sustained by voluntary or forced agreement. In any society men must submit to a system of regulations that are admittedly conventions, and if ever we are to escape the disorders of our present life, we must work out, establish and enforce a new and better system of rules and conventions, scientifically correlated parts of a world social organization.

Every principal in the world machine must be

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designed. The property-money system must play in with the system of production, with the educational system, with the organization for the extension of science, with the transport organization, with the biological controls. These must all be proportionate one to another, interacting with one another and modifiable in relation to each other. They must be correlated by "conditioned conventions." And all such structural conventions have to be supported by moral training and legal restraints.

Socially serviceable finance, for instance, is no more instinctive in the natural man than aviation. He has to *learn* to live financially, to "play the game" in this field. He has to learn, and he has to see that by law and rule his fellows also learn, to play that game. By nature he is something of a bully and a rebel; he had to *learn* to be a restrained critic of and collaborator in education and government. His disposition is to be an indolent parasite, with an occasional impulse to do unwanted work at the wrong time; childish unhelpfulness clings to him as he grows up, he will be disposed to cheat, he will be disposed to shirk at the slightest

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intimation of restriction; he has to *learn* his general economic duty and be broken in to his special rôle in productive work and co-operation. He has to observe not Ten Commandments but ten score, and to adjust his code consistently to a complex of new occasions.

So far the human mind has never planned with that much thoroughness nor learnt to that extent, and that, says Steele, driving it home, is what is the matter with us all.

Beginning Again and Again

FROM his study of those hand specimens of human insufficiency, the Socialist leaders, Steele leaps forward to vast generalizations. The latter chapters of his fifth book are mainly a fabric of quotations, a record of the petty inconsistencies and evasions, drawn from Hansard and Mrs. Hamilton and Scotch newspapers, of one poor vain ambitious soul; the sixth book, by way of contrast, is a skeleton universal history. He sets himself to out-Spengler Spengler, squeeze the essence out of Toynbee and anticipate the ultimate volumes of Will Durant. He rewrites human history, or rather he constructs a sort of table of contents with notes for a universal history in the form of a history of frustration.

I can indicate here only the cardinal points of this planetary excursion. With a certain plausibility he asserts that the three or four centuries up to and including the career of Alexander the Great, saw an expansion of human possibilities and human

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ideas, as great as anything that has happened in the past hundred years. It was an advance beyond all precedents. It was like lights and people coming into a darkened room. Thought broke frontiers; writing and money, however small their effect at first, became definite international forces; systematic history, progressive knowledge, political scheming, began. Buddhism was the first universal religion, finding receptive minds everywhere. The idea of human unity under one ruler or under one God or under one cyclic scheme, took shape. Then it was that the coming world community was conceived.

There has never been a generation in the world since, in which somewhere men were not carrying on towards that end, adding something to the project, pressing along some new line of hope. An organization, he remarks, that takes twenty-five centuries to incubate, is likely to live a long life when at last it struggles into the light. Attempt after attempt to realize that ever-advancing idea of a unified and co-operating species has met with frustration. But this history of frustrations, he is convinced, is a story of birth pangs. "And

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now," he writes, in a state of obstetric excitement and encouragement, "and now. . . ."

He gives separate chapters of shrewd sketchiness to several of these futile storms of creative urgency. He follows modernist ideas in his estimate of the rôles of St. Paul, Mithraism and Egyptian religiosity, in the frustration of the universality of Jesus. He indulges in some inexcusable speculations about the characters and private circumstances of the earlier Christian Fathers. He then imagines a book of memoirs, "The Coulisses of Nicæa," written by a private friend of the Emperor who has been unobtrusively present as an observer at that momentous council.

Finally he arraigns one of the most debatable texts in the New Testament. "I would like," he says, "to know about the man who wrote in that text about 'rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's.' He must have been a nice politic soul and very anxious to see Christianity getting on in the world. He would have worn a court suit with the rest of the Labour ministers if he had lived eighteen hundred years later. A Jesus who could dodge

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away from his own Kingdom of Heaven like that would never have died on the cross." For, indeed, in that Kingdom of Heaven he proclaimed, God was all, and Cæsar and his coins as subject to righteousness as Dives or Lazarus.

Then Steele turns to the frustration of democratic revolution in America and France. Here again were two associated phases when the endlessly thwarted and endless hopefulness of men broke out and yielded much generous living, much fraternity and honest social rectification, before it faded out again in face of the uncharted immensity of its task. It had not taken the septic possibilities of property and money into its calculations—among other omissions. It was more "piecemeal" even than its successor, socialism.

(In his papers I find a mass of notes, put into no sort of order, in which Steele attempts to trace the origins of this "democratic revolution in America and France" in the stir of the Reformation, and back from that to the economic stresses and social unrest of the later middle ages. Still further vistas opened towards the social disintegration of the Roman Empire. This bundle of notes

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fades out wistfully. There are even notes from Breasted about social discontent in dynastic Egypt. Steele's asides and footnotes had this trick of expanding abruptly to encyclopædic proportions and overwhelming their author.)

"The Moscow Frustration," as Steele tells of it, is a study in the deterioration of yet another blazing star of hope. The soul of Bolshevism was suffocated mainly by its own protective police and by strategic intolerance. The Bolshevik leaders were so preoccupied, so unprepared and overworked that they could not scrutinize their police. They had to trust somewhere; and they had the urgent man's fear of an open, delaying wrangle. Suppression grew rank under their feet. They would rather keep on the wrong course than risk the loss of élan involved in a halt for consultation. They did not realize the danger from within; the secret slackening and deterioration that are inevitable when the bracing inhibitions of criticism are withheld.

All this part of Steele's work is very incomplete. These chapters are mere schemes for studies in modern history. Apparently he intended to call in help to fill in his outline of human disappointments.

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If he had been a multi-millionaire he would, I think, have endowed scores of special chairs in the science of history. As distinguished from mere factual arrangement it is indeed a new science. I think he is inclined to be over-critical of Russia, just as he is too harsh with poor old Marx, because of some subtle strain of disappointment in this direction. He is angry at their inadequacy and imperfection—because in some respects they come nearest being right. They made his sensitiveness to their frustration most acute.

The point Steele stresses in all these cases of a fresh start, is that essentially they failed through incompleteness and through that intolerance and incapacity for modification and assimilation which arise out of impatience. Every one of these later false dawns, at any rate, is enormously documented. The industrious student can extract for us and tell us nearly every step in their failure, he can expose what was overlooked and what was deliberately disregarded, he can tell who it was forgot and who faltered. The experimental value of each successive frustration is greater, the indications for thought are clearer.

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“Because, of course,” says Steele, making one of those abrupt breaks of his, “now—we have to begin again.”

Then, assuming his favourite rôle of the well-informed amateur biologist, Steele writes a long essay on Beginning Again. It might almost be called a eulogy of frustration. He draws a terrible picture of a non-reproductive world without any natural death, a world encumbered and choked with its past, a world without freshness or any sense of novelty. The “biological use” of the individual life is not achievement but experiment, failure and a lesson, and so too are all these larger-scale efforts to organize living forces. The conscious efforts to unify and rationalize human life, which have been going on now with increasing purposefulness for five-and-twenty centuries, when seen from the perspective of geological time, are no more and no less than a struggle to secure a new foothold for the race, which won, will be in itself only a basis for new and nobler discontents.

And so on.

From these flights into biological philosophy, Steele returns, refreshed and cheerful, to our

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current solitudes. The world, he declares, is in slack water between one great rush of creative effort and another. Every preceding drive has been found insufficient, and always there has been an interval of confused reaction before the next drive found a sufficient basis in new ideas. We may overrate the evil of many of the eddies in the slack-water phase. We may lose our sense of proportion in the face of the social destructions, the storms of persecution and ill-regulated indignation, that glare close to our eyes to-day. It may be that those who love liberty need a lesson in self-protection and mutual aid, and that many ancient cultures and traditions will be all the better for a strenuous self-examination. The hostility to Christianity in Russia and to Judaism in Central Europe—if one may write of these things without the faintest intention of condoning the almost insane brutality of the Nazi persecution—may have a justification that it is unwise to neglect. Some such shock of horror may be necessary for that stupendous self-satisfaction of the Jewish and Christian cultures, which has hitherto withstood both persecution and predominance. The raucous voice of the Nazi

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may be raising issues that would otherwise have remained unscrutinized. His frantic rage at economic disadvantages and particularly at the loss and transfer of power through speculative acquisition, may indicate stresses far beyond mere sadistic desire and a craving for loot. It is time the Jews thought themselves out. It might not be a bad thing now if, as a separate culture, they thought themselves out of existence altogether. These crude flamboyant tyrannies may be purging many consciously well-meaning intelligences of much self-complacent, ineffective, unsound stuff, and steeling them for finer and broader efforts.

There is no final defeat for an individual, says the biologist, but fruitlessness and death, and no final defeat for a species until nothing remains of it to begin again.

The Next Beginning

STEELE is so far forgetful of his own urgency for simplification and lucidity that he nowhere gives a synopsis of this Next Beginning of his which is to synthesize all the creative social conceptions that mankind has so far accumulated, which is to put a new façade upon the old religions and draw us all together in a more unified and lucid struggle against frustration than has hitherto been attempted. But to the attentive readers of his voluminous *Anatomy*, the shape of his intentions is perfectly plain. I am trying to make a bare statement of it here, to make Steele as clear as I can to those who do not know his *Anatomy*, although, necessarily, shorn of context and qualification, it will have a raw, a hurried and dogmatic flavour that is imperceptible to those who are familiar with the fuller and more leisurely text of his ideas.

Here, of course, there is no panacea, no final dogmatic Plan. It is the attempt of one man to

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envisage the present complex of creative desire and impulse in the world, and the present possibilities of realizations. It is a report upon current initiatives and prospects rather than a plan. It is a clarifying summary, not an innovation. It is a compilation making for a synthesis. It is, in fact, an outline of the Next Beginning.

And first it is to be noted how plainly now the political unification of mankind frames the Next Beginning. The two Beginnings that preceded our own time, democratic republicanism, the last but one, and socialism, the last, did indeed both glance at internationalism, but in an "idealistic" and subconsciously hopeless manner. They then sat down to the promotion of "national" revolutions. It needed propaganda by radio, the hum of the aeroplane and the fear of gas warfare to teach even progressive thought that the world has now, in plain fact and law and intention, to be made one. The Next Beginning must be inevitably a world scheme. It must be a scheme for the production and distribution of all staple requirements throughout the whole earth. It must be a planetary economic plan with a universal theory of property

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and payment. It must involve one common monetary method because *in an organized economic life there can be no general individual freedom without the method of cash payments*, for these alone can liberate men from the slavery of payment in kind. It must provide a system of world directorates for these common interests, and it must ensure that these directorates work in an atmosphere of adequate criticism, and are in some way, direct or indirect, made responsible for their conduct to the general intelligence. This basal material organization must be explained to and understood by the whole world; an understanding of the social life of the species must be the main objective of a universal education, and the service and protection of the world-commonweal the primary form of moral training. This primary unity must determine also the hygienic and biological organization of the world. Religious life must conform, on its social side, to the requirements of this world-civilization.

That, I think, states the essential form of the Next Beginning as Steele conceived it. World-civilization is its objective. But since human affairs

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are not at present cast in this form, it is necessary to supplement the statement and elaboration of the concept of a world-commonweal, with a complex, studied theory of revolution. All the intricate balances, thrusts and conflicts of our present fragmentary organization of life, furnish and encumber the world arena in which the Next Beginning has to manifest itself, and they have to be dealt with intricately and variously and rightly in the struggle towards a synthesis. They have to be dealt with rightly. Every blunder in dealing with them prolongs the struggle. Every difficulty may be complicated and increased by unwise or unlucky handling.

Steele puts himself into violent contrast with Communist or Fascist or Christian in his vigorous repudiation of the idea that any single organization can undertake such a fusion and reconstruction of existing systems of relationship, as the achievement of a social and economic world unification demands. The frustrated initiatives of the past have begun, he says, as "teachings," as cut and dried statements of objective. And by the sheer inflexibility of this style of beginning their frustration also began from

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the start. But every day the Next Beginning will admit it has learnt something, and qualify, extend and write in to its creed. It will grow and change as a living being changes, remaining always itself. It will fit its methods to the occasion incessantly. It will always be the Next Beginning making way for the Next Beginning. It will deliver its attack not in a phalanx but in an unending series of waves. As science does.

Modern science has been so profoundly and permanently revolutionary because it set about its work with no revolutionary intentions whatever, and the Next Beginning, unlike any of its predecessors, must be saturated with the spirit of science. "World menders" have all belittled science hitherto because it had none of that dogmatic vehemence they mistake for vigour. Now they learn better. Bulls may charge with their eyes shut, but not men. Freedom of statement, freedom of discussion throughout the world, is of as much importance to humanity as food or clothing. Advance easily—in open order. If ever any restraint whatever is put upon babble, clamour and incitement in the new world, it must be done

in order that voices may be heard, not that voices may be silenced.

Steele's innate, primary, uncriticized belief that free enquiry and discussion *must* lead to his own conclusions is notable and very evident here. Men's minds are very much alike, he says, and though some are quicker and more penetrating than others, they move forward in the same manner. It is all nonsense to say that opinions differ fundamentally. Nowadays they differ mainly through differences in experience and training. An enquiry into the precise meaning of terms and phrases, supplemented by the methods of psychoanalysis, can resolve most of their discrepancies. Under the same conditions and in the presence of the same problems people think alike with only very slight individual divergences—divergences of little or no importance in relation to social and political life.

And this being his persuasion, there is nothing very illogical in his going on to formulate those right ideas which he is convinced must emerge from a free play of the contemporary mind. They emerge from the travail of his own mind, and

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what the world thinks should be like the sample. This is on all fours with his insistence that there is honesty and some rightness in every religion that has ever had a working hold upon our species, and with his attacks upon that mental indolence which refuses to struggle with differences of expression.

He is very insistent in his sixth book that the organization of world unity involves the evocation of world controls, differing both in structure and function from any existing government. This is one of his dominating ideas. He will not hear of a Parliament of Mankind or a World President or anything of the sort. It is, he says, "the easy preliminary pitfall" for the mind which first seeks to picture a world-commonweal, to conceive it as a large-scale replica of existing state governments. "The first task of a revolutionary propaganda aiming at world unity" is to abolish that misconception.

Existing governments, he explains, have been evolved as militant directorates concerned primarily with the aggressive and defensive application of force. But in a world-pax the employment

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of force will be largely a reserve resource of the general police, and the main functions to be discharged by world-wide directive organizations will be economic, financial and informative. These conceivably can arise through federal agreements between existing governments. The old governments did not originally concern themselves with economic, monetary or biological interests, and when they handle them, they handle them clumsily and contentiously, with a bias towards their subordination to militant policy. They are not built for the job, and manifestly a world combination of them must be even less fitted for the job. They must be prepared to delegate their authority to a federal council of a different kind, an *ad hoc* organization for the new job. It is not necessary to abolish existing governments, therefore, unless they are directly resistant to world organization. They are beside the mark. Their world function will be to sanction. They will fade into functionless traditions, as a new non-militant type of federal world organization takes their place and supersedes their significance.

The rôle of the subject of any government, who

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wishes to forward and participate in the Next Beginning, is not, therefore, to attempt to destroy his own or any other government, with the idea of substituting a raw new one, larger and similar, but to do his utmost to render it amenable to the development of an economic-financial-educational federation of the world. If a particular government has to be destroyed forcibly in that process, and some may have to be destroyed forcibly, so much the worse. It will be an unfortunate necessity and it will leave a scar. World civilization is not antagonistic to existing governments except, and in so far as, and while, they are antagonistic to an organized world economy. But in so far as that antagonism is marked and deliberate, loyalty to world civilization and its progressive organization must override any formal political loyalty. Governments which control or suppress research, discussion or truthful non-malignant propaganda are plainly governments in insurrection against that world civilization which is already demanding the loyalty of every rational man.

Steele sees the Next Beginning, advancing behind the propaganda of these framework ideas, and taking

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the form of a multitude of political and organizing movements for the establishment of world-wide or almost world-wide directorates and controls. These movements may go on almost independently, linked only by their planetary range. In spite of all contemporary appearances to the contrary Steele believed that it is not merely possible but urgent that in the various fields of health, money and credit, in the production and distribution of staple commodities, in transport and particularly air transport, in standard of life and police, cosmopolitan controls should come into existence. The stars in their courses fight against particularism in these matters. It is all a question whether these things should arrive through a subconscious yielding to ill-apprehended pressures, an instinctive, wasteful, tragic yielding, masked by false issues and unfolding long further chapters in the history of human frustration; or whether they should be brought about rapidly in the spreading light of a wide understanding and desire. The success of the propaganda of the Next Beginning throughout the world, must determine which alternative prevails.

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This peculiar and on the whole refreshing assurance of Steele's that there is only one right way of thinking about most of our contemporary problems, not only makes him write of this idea of his, of unification through the creation of a group of *ad hoc* federal directorates, as though it was the only possible idea for a properly informed clear-headed man, but also it makes him write in the same strain of assurance about the broad principles of economic organization. He is incapable of believing that there are men who can reasonably oppose the general propositions of collectivism, unless a subconscious craving for their personal profit, or some deep-rooted malice, blinds them to the logic of the case.

Private property with its flux, money, works as a contrivance for the adjustment of individual motives to the commonweal. Whatever its origins. Steele cannot imagine that proposition questioned, and he rides on from that to a shrewd analysis of the different types and classes of private property, both those that have to be recognized and protected in a modern state, and the broader sorts that can

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only work efficiently when they are vested in a "competent receiver" operating in the collective interest. He jeers at "absolute socialism." He says that men and women who can sit down to a serious discussion of "socialism versus individualism" are fit only for institutional treatment. Socialism is always a matter of degree. Progress towards Socialism can be only progress in the organization of the competent receiver and in the exacter definition of private property. There are degrees and limitations of ownership, and Steele's standing astonishment at the absence of any clear science of property, a science directly applicable to law and constructive legislation, is expressed again and again. In this field, for lack of firm charting and landmarks, we are still completely at the mercy of winds and eddies of opinion.

His determination to discuss money only as a part of his general theory of property is implacable. He would set very definite limits to the use of money. Only for very definite kinds of property should there be "free sale." For food, clothing, adornment, transportation and shelter, Steele

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would allow practically "free purchase"; almost every other kind of acquisition from a pet dog to a mountain valley he would make conditional on a more or less completely defined "proper use." By a reorganization of distribution and a development of public stock keeping—a colossal extension of the post office, so to speak—he would squeeze deliberate acquisition for resale, passive non-manufacturing ownership for monetary profit, that is, out of the category of permissible things. Apparently he wanted to tariff and control all distributors from the shipowner to the barrow-man. He is very hostile to what he calls profit by "interception"—meaning very much what the Bolsheviks, in their age of virtue, used to mean by "speculation." The establishment of "a lucid science and statement" of the "property-money institution" is as integral to the Next Beginning as the establishment of a lucid conception of a world commonweal. The realization of that science and that conception, the conversion of that knowledge and that idea into material and living reality, is "the general business of mankind." What other general business can there be? It is

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the formal aspect of new religion, the modern Islam. To this you must give yourself, because there is no other right thing to which you can give yourself. And give yourself you must if you are to escape mortality.

All this Steele puts forward to you not as something supplementary to whatever beliefs and persuasions you have in your head already. He means that this is the new truth which replaces all previous less perfected truths as a new car replaces an old car, that you have to *drop* your present religion, your loyalties and your code of behaviour unless they accord with all this, and that you *have* to make this, which he calls the Next Beginning, your religion, your code of behaviour and your criterion of loyalties. If it is not final truth, it is as far as we have got. In his fashion he is as intolerant as Christ or Mohammed. He does not speak as a divinity or a prophet, but he speaks as one who is compelled to see by the nature of his needs and mind what you also must be compelled to see by the nature of your needs and mind. The only concession he will make to your old religion or your old code and loyalties

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is to say that, under examination, these do reveal cramped partial anticipations of the greater constructive common purpose that now dawns upon our minds.

The Frustration of a World Pax

IN comparison with his invasions of, or rather his raids into, historical speculation, Steele's treatment of the problem of World Peace seems remarkably close-knit. His peculiar aversion from negative terms, his flair for negatives disguised as positives, is very much in evidence. It is manifest he does not like the ambiguity of the word Peace for that reason. It is too easily interpreted as the absence of war; he harps upon the idea that Peace must be a *forceful substitute* for war.

The gist of his argument is that world peace is something entirely less natural than war preparation. It requires no *effort* for a man nowadays to remain a tax-paying obedient citizen of a modern combatant state. He finds himself there. The masses drift to war, individually unwilling but collectively feeble. When they find themselves in the war rapids it is too late to resist. Modern war so far as the masses go is not strong action, it is weakness. It is like the screaming and kicking of a person

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for whom the forces of life are too much and who falls into a fit of epilepsy. Peace must be *imposed* upon a weakly warring world. A World Pax must be a conquest; not an abdication.

Steele deals very briefly with the vast complex of anti-war movements that passed across the mental surface of the world in the period after 1914. They were particularly prevalent in the English-speaking and Scandinavian communities. "They just said they wanted no more war; they said it by the hundred thousand, they said it by the million, they passed resolutions, irresolute resolutions, they printed tons of books and pamphlets, and they did no more about it." And then he settles down to a long and penetrating analysis of the League of Nations experiment.

If Socialism was frustrated by an incomplete proposition, the League of Nations, Steele asserts, was brought to futility by bad analogies. Slovenly and inadequate thinking, he declares, is one day a matter of the study and the newspaper office, and the next a spreading virus of human disaster. The last thing human beings will learn is that it is impossible to get good results from a bad arrange-

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ment of ideas. All social misfortunes have their primary cause in intellectual poverty and mental infection. The men who conceived the League of Nations had old-fashioned legalist and not modern biological minds; they floated on conventions and were incapable of penetrating to realities. And so the League of Nations, to which great numbers of people looked for saving veracities, never produced anything better than evasive formulæ.

For decades two bad analogies paralyzed the human will for unity. The first of these was the false analogy which paralleled states with human individuals. The personification of states played a large part in human frustration in the early twentieth century. Small states were given such characters as "brave and little" and in the political interplay their "rights" were maintained exactly as the "rights" of small individuals were maintained against bigger or more powerful associates. But in reality a small state of five million inhabitants is exactly one twentieth as important as a great state of one hundred millions. It is not an individual at all.

The League of Nations organization is based on

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this false analogy. It does not simply ignore, it contradicts, the reality that the whole earth belongs now to *all mankind* and cannot be treated any longer in a multitude of separate unequal parcels. We cannot tolerate that small communities of people should squat on this or that region of natural resources, claim sovereignty over it and drive a bargain with the rest of the world, any more than we can tolerate the private ownership of land and natural resources. But the League of Nations recognizes, intensifies and does its utmost to preserve the conventions of nationalism and the emotions of patriotism. The primary objective for those who desire a world-order, is the replacement of patriotic obsessions by the idea of cosmopolitan duty. We need to replace the "locality framed" mentalities of the past and present by "function framed" world-wide mentalities. Until producers are thinking in terms of world production and distributors in terms of world transport, until the organization and restraint of force is thought of as one simple world-wide scheme, there cannot be any organic unity in a World Pax. It will continue to be like one of those long

carnival dragons, in which a number of men, on their separate legs, walk under a cloth with a cardboard head. The internal dissensions of such a composite monster have furnished the fun for a score of comic films and dramas. Unhappily they are also providing the tragedy in contemporary history.

The second bad analogy contributing to the political futility of the times is the assumption that the political organization of the contemporary combatant state can be paralleled and imitated in any world organization. This assumption is Steele's *bête noire*. Here I find him running into what is very much Lenin's line of thought about the "State." The State, so far as it is the organization of power in the world, will tend to disappear. As Steele sees it, a great economic directorate, a great research, informative and educational system, a hygienic directorate, all three working upon a common scientific conception of the common interest, will co-operate in the co-ordination of human activities, and so the control and application of force will be less and less necessary. The existing state organizations are primarily

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force organizations. They will decline to the level of local racketeering. They will "fade out" as the world federal organizations work more and more efficiently. The combative, litigious and bargaining activities of men will diminish as their productive and creative activities develop.

It is through their failure to grasp this essential change in the structure of the community, that people evolve visions of a World President, World Senates and World Assemblies engaging in debates upon "policies" and playing the ancient game of parties and sections upon a mightier scale. But it is almost impossible to imagine any such single political government arising except through the practical conquest of existing states; it would be a super state imposed by one or more of them upon the rest. But the organized world community must arise by the essentially different and ultimately far less difficult process of federal delegation. Nine tenths even of our most passionate Peacemakers have no rational idea and will not grasp the need for a clear rational idea, of the way to peace. "You cannot make peace," he writes, "by *mooing like cows* at passing soldiers. Making per-

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petual peace is a huge, heavy, complex, distressful piece of mental engineering."

The mental trouble which frustrates the disposition towards World Peace is not, Steele points out, merely one of logical fallacies. Beneath in the subconscious there are deep and powerful antagonisms to the pacification of the world. The story of Man is the story of an excessively pugnacious ape being slowly tamed. Man is a suspicious and fearful creature and easily aroused to fight what he distrusts and fears. In the face of every new necessity he struggles with an irrational antagonism to novelty. Treaties, laws and every limitation of his freedom to act spasmodically, move him towards a sort of claustrophobia. The thought of being tied up drives him frantic. And there is considerable justification for this distrust of his. We are treacherous to each other, and our fabric of social order rests on profoundly untrustworthy supports. We are afraid of each other—and with reason. This fearing, snapping animal is being made into a civilized creature slowly enough by the measure of an individual life, but with incredible rapidity by the biological scale of time.

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The tension of the effort to lift up the whole mind and will "above the plane of instinctive personal mortality, to a rationalized immortal universalism of creation," the tension to evoke an order that is "in certain details so unprecedented as to be almost unthinkable," is immense. The mind that really seeks to give itself and its will to the Next Beginning is by the nature of things a mind overstrained. Close to its surface of fair intentions flows the dark converse stream of suppressed dread and malignity. This is why there is so much snarling, bickering and suspicion among those who are setting themselves sincerely to shape their general conduct in the form of human service. "One can almost say the nobler in plan, the meaner in detail." The wider you stretch your moral energy the thinner it becomes. The intolerance and general bad manners of the Communists from Marx onward are proverbial. The lives of most strenuous, honest, wide-thinking men are shot with a snarling jealousy. The naïve disciple is puzzled and misled by these almost inevitable ignobilities on the part of his prophets and exemplars.

On the other hand, those who have abandoned or never made any attempt to suppress the combative forms of patriotism, xenophobia and racial self-righteousness, who are guided therefore and protected on every hand by recognized conventions, may escape these stresses. Thackeray's Colonel Newcome is an immortal revelation of the moral charmingness and richness that accompany such fundamental stupidity. The ultimate result of these conventional conformities is futility and disaster, but meanwhile they sustain a lot of consistent emotional living and extract a dignified, if sentimental, simplicity from the incoherent imperatives and loyalties of their unanalyzed purposes.

Finally, Steele takes up the still very large moiety of human beings who definitely like war, know they like war, want it and seek it. They are people of "coarse excitability." They experience an agreeable thrill in bristling up to a challenge. Their blood quickens as conflict approaches them. The sense of militant assertion is very pleasant to them. A child with a drum can be seen working itself up to a mood of this sort. Everyone has a

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certain fear of war or any sort of combat, but in recruits and soldiers going into battle one can see plainly that they are screwing themselves up to the fight as many people screw themselves up to swim in cold water—because they feel that it is good for them and because there is an unprecedented intensity of reaction in it that they feel they will presently like. They are convinced they will regret it if they shirk. This orgiastic aspect of warfare appeals to nearly all of us, and until we learn to live as strenuously and dangerously in times of peace it will continue to attract. People do not like the risk of being killed in battle but still less do they like stagnant living. There are urgencies in them more powerful than fear.

Pacifism will continue to be frustrated until there comes such a dream of peace as will stir men like a trumpet. Peace needs its drum-taps. Peace also must marshal its myriads, not for mere parades but for thrilling collective efforts. Peace must provide social orgasms more gratifying than warfare.

The human imagination throughout the world, Steele concludes, has to be so educated that war will

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be seen as a dreary diversion of energy from excitements more splendid and satisfying. War is not what it was, and mankind does not understand this yet. Its triumphs have evaporated; its heroisms disappear. It is a perversion, a slacker's resort, clumsy, violent and fruitless, agitated humanity's self-abuse. The terrible hero-warrior of old-world imagination becomes a dangerous and dirty sadist with a gas mask on his face and poison in his fist. When that is seen clearly, then and then only will the peace of the world be secure.

The Frustration of Abundance

I FIND something at once heroic and faintly absurd in the big volume in which Steele attempts to develop a summary, complete enough to allow us to make directive conclusions, out of the vast mass of human thinking, theorizing and experimenting about what he calls "Property-Money Conventions."

One thing I find particularly good and clear in this valiant effort—at times it is like a single cow trying to turn a thousand haystacks and a continent of grassland into milk—is Steele's rejection of all legalistic and historical accounts of money. However it came about, money is now part of the mechanism which deflects individual desire and effort into the economic service of the community. He says in one place, "There never was nor is a Social Contract, and yet it is quite the best form in which to deal with endless relationships. And equally there never was nor is a systematic social-economic machine, and yet we have in effect a

social-economic machine, and we can bring all our laws and arrangements about ownership, production and distribution to the test of its operative efficiency."

The only natural things underlying the mechanism of property are greed and respect for our fellows. On these a vast intricate fluctuating system of conventions has been built, entirely artificial and entirely amenable to modification. And in his titanically conceived ninth volume, he attempts to get together and bring into comparison every usage and every idea about ownership, accounting and monetary symbols that can be found in operation or under consideration in the world. Naturally his previous critique of Socialism "goes into the boiling" of this second, wider and more detailed attack upon the problem of productivity and distribution.

As I turn over these pages, I realize with astonishment what immense wildernesses of enquiry and primary scientific examination about social and economic science remain still practically untouched. In the whole world there are only a few score of almost isolated workers nibbling at this ency-

clopædic, this cosmic investigation. And so it was inevitable that this volume nine, for all its copiousness and Steele's magnificent efforts to achieve a sort of digest, should at times become a mere prospectus of questions, an agenda for non-existent literature, a series of tadpole chapter headings, heads with mere motile tails.

"Irresponsible Ownership, Responsible Ownership—*responsible to whom?*" is one of these. This reopens his indictment of Socialism on the one hand, and on the other leads to a sketchy but suggestive assembly and classification of all the different kinds of things that can in any way be owned. It is a classified inventory of human resources. He considers substances; he considers matter in motion such as rivers, he considers territorial control, he considers substances in a position to yield energy and generally, energy-yielding substances. He considers things that "excite and gratify." Naturally he wanders into some thorny and trackless regions, gets lost and jumps back to start afresh. He tries to take up his material successively from three different directions of approach. He defines the nature of each sort of

property and explains how that nature conditions its use. Then he sorts out his economic material according to the use of each sort of property—its function, that is to say, in the totality of human activities. And finally he discusses the necessary constitution of the “owning will,” individual or collective—the merchant adventurers, joint stock company, public department or what not—that must direct and operate if the possible function of any natural material or natural force is to be fully realized.

Certain tendencies that have been emerging throughout Steele’s previous volumes become much plainer to himself and his readers in this ninth bale. Someone has written of Steele as a “sample modern mind” trying to make head and tail of the contemporary drive in things. Steele would have said that it was the duty of every living brain to make the same attempt that he was making. It is an impossibly intricate task for an isolated mind, but it is not at all an impossibly intricate task if there is a crowd movement of minds. If many with a certain community of spirit attempt it, they must fall into co-operation and

all the possibilities will alter. A guideless man or a man pestered by false and interested guides might easily be lost in the streets of London or the high-roads of Europe, but not a man with good maps and time-tables. Competent economic charting is a primary need for civilization, and the increase in individual power due to competent charting seems incalculably great.

Steele knows quite clearly that his survey of property-money is about as useful a guide for behaviour as those pathetic maps of the world which existed before the sixteenth century, would have been guides for world planning. Mapping has only begun; we have only mapped geographically. The primary weapon we now need in the human fight against frustration is a New Encyclopædia. If I had to invent a name for Steele and his type of thought, I should call him a New Encyclopædist and his philosophy the "New Encyclopædism." To be more precise I should say he was a stoical humanitarian whose method was the encyclopædic method. He would have his perpetually renewed Next Beginning, guided and followed up by a perpetually revised Encyclopædia.

He wanted to bring "Diderot up to date" and keep him up to date, to evoke a world-wide organization for factual exchange and mental clearing-house work, which would have the same relation to the old Encyclopædias that the modern transport network has to a train of pack mules.

But this demand for a world Encyclopædia is merely a digression in his ninth book; he was to expand it more fully in his tenth. The general layout of his survey is interesting. His threefold method of approach produces what are practically three parallel surveys. The first is a sketch of economic geography. He ranges all over the world and probes as far into the crust as he can. This, he says in effect, is the human estate. Why do we make so poor a use of it? Here are resources undeveloped. Here are resources wasted. Why? He leaves his answer open, but the open ends often point in very definite directions.

The second survey is taken from the consumer's end. Here are needs and appetites going unsatisfied. Why? He makes big vague gestures towards an estimate for a world properly clothed, fed and sheltered. It is not his fault that his estimates are

mere wild guesses. There is no absolute reason why such estimates should not be precise. A standard of life, given a quantitative knowledge of what is at present mere speculation, could be defined. A world atlas of to-day in comparison with a world atlas of 1500 A.D. is not more informative than the working estimates we need here would be in comparison with our existing views.

The third limb of his survey arises out of the former two. It is really the project of an immense essay on—to use his own phrase—“Ownership, Wages and Other Claims.” It is a demand for a science upon which law and morality in relation to property and money can be rebuilt. This science would be essentially a branch of psychology, and he invades one stormy region of controversy after another with an unfaltering temerity. I think perhaps the most interesting thing for the general reader will be what he calls his Three Theses. They run as follows:

Firstly, that whatever the origins of the ideas and practices of ownership may be, ownership is now made, protected and enforced by the laws of society, and there is no reason whatever except

the collective welfare why any sort of ownership or any particular ownership should be enforced or permitted. This is plainly the sole basis for all modern law affecting property throughout the world.

Secondly, that whatever the distribution of sovereignties may have been in the past, All Mankind is now the ultimate owner of the natural resources of the planet, earth, sky and sea, and that, failing for the present a complete general direction for the exploitation of these resources—which general direction will in time arrive not by any usurpation of power but by the natural development of scientific imperatives—all current sovereignties and ownerships must be regarded as provisional, and those who have them must be regarded as caretakers of treasure-trove and navigators of derelicts, all responsible to a final accounting. The criterion by which all the conditions of their ownership must be valued, is the extent to which these conditions fall in with and exploit the primitive human impulses so as to subserve the human commonweal. Property is the *quid pro quo* by which the man of spirit surrenders

to collective living and it is the common guarantee against intolerable usurpation. Men without ownership and freedom, or the pride that comes with these things, are incurably careless with the goods of this world and spiritless in production. For that reason property must continue to exist. But property must be "kinetic." It must never "congeal." Modern property in land or any sort of natural resources can be at most only a "stimulating responsible leasehold."

Arising out of this thesis comes another hypertrophied footnote, another of those headlong, copious, inspiring and inadequate summaries which are so characteristic of the frustrated encyclopædist in Steele, a survey of the conditions under which land, mineral rights, territorial rights (of hunting, of way, etc.), boats and ships, weapons, wives, slaves, covenanted services, family rights, debts and obligations, homes, clothing, ornaments, temples, are and have been owned, and the psychology which tolerates and enforces or has in the past tolerated and enforced all these variants upon the themes of "It is mine" and "It is ours." The reader whose reading goes back to Victorian days

will be reminded of that other frustrated and now forgotten prospectus, Herbert Spencer's scheme for the study of sociology.

The third thesis opens with the provocative statement that "money exists to pay wages." It is the mechanism of the producer's share-out. Steele argues that the whole economic machine is essentially a process of work; that it can be presented as a spectacle of work; that the worker's instinct to render unrewarded services is practically negligible and that it is money that "works the worker." Payment in kind means servitude but payment in money is liberty of choice. The expectation of security and satisfactions upholds the worker through the less interesting parts of his task and justifies the parts that are interesting. "Work" he uses in a very wide sense for anything and everything wilful that keeps the economic machine running. Acquiescence is "work." Being born and undergoing education is "work." Work done justifies not only immediate pay, but pensions, retirement pay, leisure and independence. The whole monetary system is to be judged by the test whether the money put into the hands of the

worker on pay-day satisfies his expectations and keeps its promises. The money system has to be worked out to a final simplicity in which you will draw your pay as you earn it, keep it by you, bother no more about it, and be sure it will neither lose nor gain in "purchasing power" until you spend it.

This ultimate simplification of money so that a note or coin means the same thing all over the world is, Steele asserts, the plain objective of every constructive economist. Anything but a world currency becomes an anachronism. And from this third and last thesis he launches out into another big volume of concentrated encyclopædism, a sketch of the history of trading, accounting and money from their beginnings up to now. He tries to find the social advantages of each new development and then, under each new development, he makes a section devoted to what he calls its "corruptions."

This, I think, is a novel and useful way of attacking the problems of economic life, as a series of unplanned inaccurate processes liable not only to wilful but to unintentional abuse. He discusses usury

and interest entirely from the point of view of whether they are biologically advantageous. They are the profits of uncertainty; they dwindle in a world of quantitative knowledge. They are clumsy expedients for getting leave to produce or for tiding over unforeseen phases of consumption in a tangled and restricted state of affairs. In the clearer-headed world ahead they will have practically disappeared.

He is particularly intent upon the way in which the "arithmetical unrestrictedness" of money lent itself to the development of debt. Before money a man could only pledge his actual possessions; with the onset of money he could incur liabilities far beyond anything he possessed. Steele accumulates a mass of quotations about speculative operations. He thinks the earliest type of borrower was the peasant awaiting his crop. The struggle of producer and consumer against forestalling and cornering has been incessant. I think that in some parts of this discussion which are much fuller than others, the discussion of company law throughout the world for instance, he must have had the advice and help of someone with a legal training. And he has also the effect of enlightenment from special

sources in his detailed study of the immense accumulation of speculative interests that has grown up about the intricacies of monetary exchange. Monetary manipulation has become increasingly vexatious in trade policy and foreign policy. It has interwoven with the felted corruptions of tariffs and trade restrictions. He calls all this the perversion of money, but then he hits out the remark, "money is a born pervert. We have to cure a congenital disease here."

The more men know of monetary complications the easier is it to reap personal advantages, and the more disingenuous becomes the attitude of the expert. The less men know, the less able are they to deal with the business. This monetary science is "a corrupting science," says Steele, and its practitioners should "work with rubber gloves." The conflict of expertise with disinterestedness is the paradox of scientific finance.

In some parts of this ninth volume Steele becomes almost as pessimistic as Burton. Burton thought Man was mad for evermore; Steele comes very near admitting that Man is incurably a short-sighted, cheating, self-frustrated fool. There is a cheat in

every shadow, fraud lurks in every inexplicit word in an agreement. The paint on our new institutions is dirty before it is dry. We cannot ignore this tendency to *fester* in every human convention and arrangement. In detail and continually, the infections, the new dodge, the fresh interceptions, have to be diagnosed and dealt with. But this is a reason for strenuous effort and not for despair. The complications are multitudinous but not more multitudinous than the business of the world; the corruptions are intricate but not beyond the compass of the human mind. Economic life can only be simplified if it is "drenched in light and kept incandescent with good intentions."

And its simplification to real efficiency must be a complicated incessant business of adjustment. "Revolution" is no final remedy for economic frustration except in so far as it may clear away some very close-knit system of abuses. Revolution means a new beginning, with new naïve principles, all void of immunity and ready to be corrupted. It carries with it a strategic necessity, usually exaggerated, for the suppression of criticism as opposition. The enquiring visitor can trace the

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development of a whole system of new corruptions in Russia, terrorism, wangling, exploitation of mass sentimentality, unscrupulously defensive privilege, beneath the dark cloak of doctrinaire intolerance.

The Frustration of World Peace, according to Steele, is due to the inadequate education of the human imagination and it can be defeated only by an immense poetic effort, by teaching, literature, suggestion and illumination. A vast Kultur-Kampf lies between mankind and peace. We must go through that battle; there is no way round. Equally does escape from economic frustration to universal abundance and social justice depend upon a mighty intellectual effort. It will have to be an effort as extensive as a world war and far more prolonged. Upon the organization and co-ordination of thousands of students and men of experience, discussing and publishing freely, helping and stimulating one another, depends the possibility of an advance into enduring plenty. And at present there is nothing in the wide world to represent the vital science needed but a few scattered professors and specialists working with negligible resources and the disconnectedness of amateurs.

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Are we to despair because of the unprecedented greatness and complexity of the work to be done?

Take hope from the story of flying, says Steele. For two thousand years and more men dreamt of flying and sought to fly. But for a wearisome sequence of centuries they never got a step forward. Now one man constructed his machine and jumped and flopped and now another; the general wisdom remained quite sure that flying was for ever denied to man. There is a long list of names of solitary men, who announced that they were discovering or had discovered flying. They achieved nothing; they left nothing to their successors but broken bodies, broken wings and discouragement. Only when a convergence of tendencies stimulated the general imagination to believe in the possibility of flying was there a "a sufficient and interlocking continuity and multitudinousness of effort for a real advance."

Then in scarcely a dozen years the problem of flying was solved. By whom? You do not know, for the simple reason that it was done by a multitude of men working in correlation. So-and-so flew quite early, and So-and-so, and So-and-so; but

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hundreds of contemporary brains had contributed even to the earliest machine that rose from the ground. It was not an inventor but a science that took men into the air. As science really grips its matter doctrinaires disappear. The Jenkins Panacea and Orthodox Jabberism will melt into a living flux of assembled and analyzed economic fact and synthesized guiding generalizations. But in economic science there is still nothing but doctrinaires. In his library, Steele says, he has several thousand books of monetary and general economic theory. *It is rare that any of these writers refer to each other; still rarer to find the slightest attempt to understand, respond or summarize.* It is less like science than the braying of showmen at a fair. "Three thousand years of isolated experimentalists and still no man could fly a yard. A few years of free co-operation, of correlated, well-reported experiments and free discussion, and Man could fly round his world. So likewise will it be with the attainment of world plenty," writes Steele and ties up his economic bale with these words, quite hopefully pointing our hopes for material welfare to the busy skies.

The Frustration of Youth

STEELE's tenth book deals with the current disorder of our education. Here again we catch him at his old trick of making highly controversial statements as though they were obvious truths. His belief that what Steele thinks to-day, the world will think to-morrow, never fails him.

In its normal sense education is "what adults tell, reveal or betray to the next generation." It is the necessary completion of man as a social animal. He cannot exist without it. There is no abstract uneducated man. Even a jungle wolf-boy is educated to a view and way of life—by wolves.

Normally hitherto when men had no perspectives in time and conceived of their institutions as permanent, education has been retrospective and conservative. The young received the wisdom of their fathers and were told exactly what was expected of them. Then they were "grown up" and ceased all further learning. The existing educational methods of the world were evolved in

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that spirit, and schools, colleges are to this day conducted mainly to put back the new generation where its parents began. It is quite a new way of looking at the aim of education, to consider it not as an exposition of institutions but of objectives. Instead of teaching youth where it stands, you have to show it whither it may be going. You have to train it not for conformity but for a permanent revolution. And the teacher must go with it—adult no longer, a learner still, pupil-teacher at the best.

“The purpose of education is a system of compatible objectives.”

As soon as our minds open out to the conception of our collective life as a Next Beginning continually renewed, then our conceptions of the form, spirit and methods of education swing round almost full circle. We are all adolescents nowadays and the only finished adults are the dead, interred or uninterred. Instead of a succession of generations “staying put” amidst perfect institutions, we want, as the pace of life increases, each generation to be more revolutionary, critical, exploratory and creative than its predecessor.

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Education expands enormously in scope and importance as we face-about towards our incessantly progressive future. It ceases to be the mere framing of adolescence. The citizen of the new world must be kept informed throughout his life. Education becomes an all-life affair. It ceases to be final in its form. It ceases to have "classics." It would as soon return to creeds and catechisms. It broadens out to embrace research and fresh thought—all research and all fresh thought however recondite. "I cannot find any point," says Steele, "at which I can draw the line between research however specialized and poetic expression however precious, and the general educational process of mankind." The highest springs and the remotest creeks are all in touch with the ocean. The education of youth now should be not a completion but an introduction, or, to put it in another way, modernity prolongs adolescence and mental adaptation to the last active phase of a lifetime. "Finishing School for Young Ladies", "Graduation" and university "Final Schools" jar almost equally on Steele's ear.

And having thus expanded Education and turned

it round so that we all find ourselves back at school again, Steele sets about another of his loose experimental surveys and commentaries, this time of all the existing schools, colleges, churches, theatres, shows, lecture halls, conferences, books, periodicals, propagandas, by which mankind is continually educating, re-educating and mis-educating itself. It almost goes without saying that he finds the totality altogether inadequate and unsuited to the present needs and opportunities of our race.

“Does one teacher in a hundred ever ask himself what he imagines he is doing to the learner and the world?”

This educational survey becomes for a time an onslaught on dons and teachers. In every generation the more vivid young go out to the activities of general life, to business, politics, adventure. But the good timid boys and girls who have clambered obediently from prize to scholarship, learning all that is respectable and nothing that is new, sit enthroned as teachers in the class-rooms and cloisters, trying not to hear the world go by outside.

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They teach about the past but they never learn to connect it with the vulgar intimidating present. There is a gap of decades between them and now. They learn languages with a meticulous precision but never how to use them with vigour. The deader the language the better it is for teaching and examination purposes. They stylize mathematics to complete inutility. They chant or mumble or sentimentalize or do a reverent hush, do anything but talk straight, when the growing soul wants to know what life is for, what its passions are for. The Ancient Books, we none of us believe in any more, are read sententiously. "Controversial matters," that is to say every living reality that will flush the cheek and brighten the eye with mental excitement, are excluded from these institutions for damping-off the young.

"We are frustrated by original sin, by fear, pugnacity, cupidity, dishonesty," writes Steele, his pen almost crying aloud, "but, most of all, we are frustrated by this damned flattening flatness of our schools. If youth did not naturally dislike its tutors and teachers and react against them, there would be little hope for any Next Beginning."

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But most of that revolt against the teacher spends itself in futile lawlessness, and it is a mere remnant of vigorous and persistent minds that carries on the effort of racial adjustment in the new generation. And so on *da capo*.

Steele has little to say about kindergarten and physical development, training of eye and hand and mental exercise. He seems to consider that that sort of thing can be done well, is being done well in many schools, could be done well in all, and it does not concern him immediately. It is only as the imagination develops in boyhood, girlhood and early adolescence, that the inefficiency of contemporary education becomes patent to him. "Nothing is more amazing," he writes, "than the charm, the alert intelligence, the fearless freedom, the cared-for mind and body of the ordinary modern child of six or seven and the slouching mental futility of the ordinary youth in the later teens."

What have they had fed to them to be mentally so ill-grown? Steele made several scrapbooks of extracts and cuttings of schoolmasters' utterances and well-authenticated speeches made to schoolboys

and schoolgirls, of books supposed to be "good" for the young, gems of history teaching, school library lists, cases of censorship, disciplinary cases. From the age of twelve or thirteen onward modern education rots and fades out, it is invaded by antiquated pedantries, suppressions and palpable bunk. The ranks of the youthful advance are broken. In nearly every country in the world to-day, the 1915-20 class as a whole is a demoralized and aimless crowd.

Anyone who wants to make the best of it, says Steele, may argue that this is slack water between two tides. But in truth though the ebb is manifest, there is no sign of any rising spirit. The prospect before the 1920-25 class is just as flat and uninspiring. The few so-called "progressive" schools we have are mainly old-fashioned private adventure schools "gone contrariwise", and often they are gravely confused and demoralized by the emotional experimentation of their promoters and staff. Until we can raise a great wind of Educational Revivalism things will stay as they are. Little good attempting a new education in odd schools here and there. A mission upon a gigantic scale has to be evoked.

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The new faith, the Next Beginning has to be inculcated in every young mind in the world. At present the concepts of the New Beginning, "the only sound creative ideas in the world", are reaching only an infinitesimal fraction of the young. The rest are falling a prey to dogmatism or insincere sentimentalities, or flying in reaction to long-exposed insurrectionary fanaticisms or lapsing into hand-to-mouth nothingness.

It is amusing to read Steele as he tries to be broadminded and patient and confident in the necessity of progress, while all the time he is fretting against his facts. His was an energetic and urgent nature, and up to his very last utterance, which I shall give in its place, he was praying in vain for the unshaken deliberation of a true scientific man, so that he should work "without haste and without delay." The situation is like trench warfare, he says, and the clue to victory is how and where to pierce the enemy front. He has no hope of penetrating our line of ordinary schools and colleges. Everything in them makes for routine and conservatism. Even when there is an appearance of progressivism about them it is a

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pretence. The more schools claim to be modern and different the more they remain the same thing. Every teacher, from a nursemaid up, who can be modernized, that is to say made to understand and made willing to impart the general ideas of the Next Beginning, is certainly a gain; but such gains will be too rare to have any mass effect. The paralyzing forces in school and college are too thoroughly dug in for any direct offensive. There is much more hope for a mental thrust through journalism, through preaching and lecturing, through the provision of reading for the baffled and enquiring adolescent, through a great variety of progressive books. To break through in these ways is to outflank school and college and to prepare a later attack upon them from a more advantageous angle. Literature, science, political propaganda must all contribute to the pressure that will ultimately make over education from its present traditionalism to a creatively revolutionary equipment of the young.

In the end that may mean the disappearance of the very forms of contemporary education, of school-rooms, lecture theatres and almost every

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process that is considered to be teaching to-day. All that system derives from the technical training of mediæval priests and monks. That is why there is so much "verbal" memory work in it, why it glorifies "scholarship," its flower, and why it is so cursed with examinations.

In all this the hope is plainly father to the thought. In passage after passage Steele's dismay at the unteachableness of schoolmasters and the rigidities of the scholastic organization—the strait-waistcoat of the school, he calls it—breaks through. The new education needs a new sort of teacher altogether. But he has left very few notes to indicate what that new sort of teacher will be. I am inclined to think he would have a sort of medical-psychologist acting as joint supervisor with the parents over the children's development. The "elements" should be done in nursery schools very much as they are done to-day. After that, by eleven or twelve say, there would be a distribution of children according to their aptitudes. Thereafter very largely they would "learn by doing". Adolescent education would be much more in the nature of apprenticeship than college teaching.

I infer these opinions less from what he recommends than from what he condemns. He knew he had not worked out the general scheme of education in a modern state and that he had nothing better to offer than preparatory suggestions with many gaps between them.

He becomes much more detailed and manifestly surer of himself when he comes to what he calls the "informative side" of education. Instead of something that is being done most desperately wrong, he is considering something that is not being done at all; he has a clear field, and his aggressive buoyancy comes against no proved discouragement. He attached extraordinary importance to the production of that "World Encyclopædia" of his. It seems to him that it is the most urgent need of our time. The main intellectual task of education is to put before the expanding mind everything that is clearly known about the nature of the world in which it finds itself, every significant thing in the problems it has to face, the essential issues under consideration, the direction of collective effort. Every mind in the world needs the framework of this common

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inheritance of knowledge, and the means of filling in whatever parts of the framework most concern it. Every mind needs to be posted in any essential extensions of knowledge or changes in general ideas.

To meet these ends he projects a sort of human memory, a central brain, an organization for the accumulation, concentration, sifting out, digestion and rendering of knowledge; it is every museum, library, scientific society, poet and thinker and active intelligence, brought into correlation. It is a synthesis of summaries. It is the *New Atlantis* on a twentieth-century instead of an Elizabethan scale.

He demands "scores of millions of pounds" for this central Encyclopædia, "expenditure on the scale of war preparation," and the participation of hundreds of thousands of workers. And from this ever-living and growing and clarifying central and fundamental Encyclopædia, there must be a continual production and renewal up-to-date of outlines and condensations of its purport and content. These are to be used for college and secondary study and for general reference and from these again a series of introductions and

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primers are to be made. So we shall get at last for our whole world community a "common basis of knowledge and general ideas" upon which an infinite variety of special interests can flourish harmoniously together.

In the glow of this project Steele manages to forget altogether the parade of donnish and scholastic drearies, the barricades of school-books, texts, examinations, with which he has dealt so faithfully. "And so, with its accounts rendered and its knowledge and aims clearly stated," he writes, "the human community may at last dare to look its children in the face and give them, before they set themselves in good earnest to play their part in it, some chance of knowing what it thinks it is about."

There are two passages about this "encyclopædic synthesis" which I think are worth quoting in full here. They lay Steele's purpose bare.

"This *Anatomy*," he writes, "is an attempt to assemble the material for a preliminary draft of that encyclopædic body of facts and ideas upon which a vital world liberalism must be based and

without which it can have no effective solidarity. It is a pioneer attempt but its aim is comprehensive. Let us consider how a guiding synthesis can be evolved out of such a gathering of material. To begin with we can have no more than a draft, a sketch, a trial framework; pretending to no authority—much less to any finality. But after a series of such amateurish and experimental synthetic efforts there will emerge that sounder and possibly compacter popular *general encyclopaedia of ideas* without which no adequate sustained movement towards a stable world civilization is conceivable. Each of these successive efforts will project a complete synthesis, will be one of a number of parallel and overlapping efforts to produce 'the Bible of the New Beginning.' The world is ripe and asking for such a synthesis and there must be a considerable number of thinkers and writers attempting such crystallizations more or less independently of one another. Just as in scientific research simultaneous discoveries are now almost the rule, so one may prophesy with confidence that there will soon be a convergence of thrusts towards this encyclopædic synthesis. The

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imperative for it verges on the obvious. *There is no escape from the anarchy of frustration that now possesses the world but in this form and in this direction.* Along the hard, laborious, precise and yet noble road that is here clearly projected, paved as it must be with the devotion of myriads of intellectual workers, Man, stripped of all the tawdry pretentiousness of his past history and all the consolations of spiritualistic imagery, must travel, if he is to achieve effective self-knowledge and gain the power for a limitless destiny.’’

Here, quoted also in full, is the second note on Steele’s idea of an encyclopædic synthesis:

“That phase in the development of human thought in which proprietary ‘systems’ of philosophy and social interpretation were taken seriously, from Platonism and Arianism to Hegelianism and Marxism, is coming to an end. ‘Isms’ are nearly over. ‘Ists’ and ‘Ites’ become anachronisms. The common-sense, that is to say, the general intelligence, of mankind, in which we all participate, is liquidating these particularisms in thought, just as it is liquidating the particularisms of nationalism

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and racial culture. The more ruthlessly we scrutinize terminology and the deeper our psychic analysis penetrates, the more we lay bare a common necessity and a common intention. Mankind finds itself one. Individually and collectively, simultaneously as a whole and in detail, a common wisdom is appearing. Not only must we all have that common wisdom, but each one in the measure of his capacity and opportunity must possess himself of the common wisdom. 'Ists' and 'isms' in science are mere controversial phases which pass as decisions are attained. The syntheses of John Doe and Richard Roe emerge to identical conclusions just as far as their terms and processes are penetrating and exacting, just so far as they escape from self-protective blinkers. Each one of us now makes his working 'ism' out of just as much as he can grasp of the common wisdom. The only philosophy and ethics, world-outlook and social and political science that a rational man can have, is what he has so made his own as to determine his personal conduct. The rest is something passing by and escaping him."

Frustration through the Conflict of Cultural Obsessions

OF all the unfinished material upon which Steele was working, the most noteworthy is a collection of notes and typed passages contained in a big envelope entitled *Frustration through Gentleness*. It might equally be called an *Analysis of Cruelty*. It is, I think, the most revelatory part of all this essay in synthesis, revelatory not only of himself but of his type and generation and school of thought and of the distinctive perplexity of our age. How, when and where may we force others? When ought we to force others?

The disposition to persecute which became rampant in the world after the Great War, the development of systems of suppression, obscurantism and intimidation over large parts of the world's surface, the lapse of government to a gangster type of discipline, the world-wide recoil towards fierce nationalism and the strategic falsification of history in support of force systems, exercised his mind

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profoundly. He had no illusions about the efficacy of non-resistance and no belief in Providence. But he disliked compulsion for himself and others, and he knew how quickly force can lose its head.

In his discussion of World Peace Steele had made it clear that peace and order had to be strong and forcible things. Peace is unnatural to living beings; it is an artificiality. Men cannot see far enough nor feel widely enough for spontaneous, sound, social behaviour. Not only rational imperatives but conventions with an unavoidable arbitrary element have to be observed, and their observation has to be imposed upon the recalcitrant. Recalcitrance can be reduced by sound education and a pervading sense of justice, but there remains and will always remain a considerable residuum of recalcitrance. Everywhere in human society recalcitrance is finding not only open expression in dissentient groups and individuals, but finding, far more destructively, escape in disloyalty, disingenuousness, cheating, perversion of usages, laws and customs. Man is more prone to hate and treachery, than to love and creative effort. "Such being your animal," writes Steele, "the creative

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thrust to make a new life for mankind must be, in spite of the best intentions, a perpetual fight against recalcitrance, within oneself and without. There is no real dividing line between gentleness and weakness, and between weakness and positive acquiescence in and the endorsement of disorder and evil."

In all these fragments and trial beginnings, I find Steele in his own peculiar, discursive, exploring, experimenting way, feeling for some guiding generalizations. He was always unhappy when he was dealing only with quantitative issues, with questions of more and less, always trying to get to the finality of a definite opposition. But here he finds himself forced to admit that we have to strike balances and estimate resultants. Acts are not "cruel or not-cruel"; they are more or less compulsive and cruel. There is a conflict of wills overt or subtle in every human relationship. Human wisdom, he puts it, must "use spur and rein"; but it has to "ride with good knees and fine hands."

He sits down to tackle the extremest cases of cruelty, destructive violence and irrational tyranny,

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that have distressed his mind. He struggles with and explores himself rather than his reader. Cruelty made him sick, he could be very easily horrified, disgusted, dismayed and inclined to vindictive reprisals; when he indicted gentleness he indicted himself; but all the same he was resolved to give cruelty its due if it had any due. He examined the words and ideas of Sadism and Masochism. He thought that they are used far too glibly and generally. Sadism and Masochism are "specialized intensifications of orgiastic sexual impulse," excessive physical self-assertion and excessive physical self-abnegation, and they fail to account for the powerful social drives towards persecution, repression, punitive law and racial antagonism. These antipathies against ugliness or meanness that may inspire cruel acts are not Sadistic. It is natural and proper to press our views, our conception of the way the world should go, our objection to antagonistic acts and suggestions. The question of just how far we may impose our ideas upon others and what means we may use to that end, is a quantitative one. Some means may be lawful but not expedient. It is legitimate to close

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a discussion and coerce, when decision is urgently necessary and opposition plainly malicious or mercenary.

Just how patient and gentle can we who want a rational word order, afford to be? And here it is evident Steele intended to expand another vast volume of the *Anatomy of Frustration*. He was going to make a sort of *History of Persecution* and he was going to assemble every possible apology for the persecutors. Almost always they had a considerable justification for what they did. Almost always they were defending beliefs that were really precious and sacred to them, or institutions whose destruction would have been desolating to them. And hardly ever, Steele argues, were the persecuted completely in the right. They were really destructive or demoralizing. They were really malicious. They were really a threat. They would tolerate no compromise and made the dispute an issue of "my way or yours." Something had to be done about them. Persecutions and tyrannies have been at times hardly more than the frantic self-protection of effete or corrupted rulers, but generally they have been more than that. Generally they are an

exaggeration of legitimate administrative measures. Generally there is a case for persecution.

In this spirit Steele proposed to pass in review not only the great "historical" persecutions but the Fascist system of outrage, the activities of the Ogpu, Nazi intolerance, the suppression of labour protests in America, the coercive side of British rule in Egypt and India. He proposed to pass them in review with a balancing impartiality that would have infuriated every indignation monger in the world. From his peculiar angle, he was disposed to regard punishments, imprisonment, personal hardship and killing as far less heinous offences against humanity than the refusal of publicity and the distortion of facts. The Crucifixion, he remarks, and the trial of Joan of Arc, "seem anyhow to have been fairly reported." If the reports had not been made both martyrs would have lived in vain. His gravest charge against the Russian, German and Italian tyrannies, is that men disappear in silence, and against labour suppression in America, that the evidence is distorted and the charges are oblique. The frame-up horrifies him; it is "black iniquity." But in an open conflict with an irrecon-

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cilable violent antagonist whom one believes to be wrong and mischievously active, where non-resistance would be tacit submission and practical participation, the cool-headed use of force to the pitch of killing and open warfare is not simply allowable but a necessary duty. There will certainly be battlefields, prisons, shootings and gallows for armed opponents on the way to Steele's socialist world-state.

That will offend many gentle-spirited readers, and still more will they be offended by his resolve to put the under-dog as well as the upper-dog on trial. The Nazi movement began in fear and exasperation. How far, he asks, was there justification for that fear and exasperation? The manifest resolve of the victors of the Great War to impose a hopeless, debt-paying servitude upon the vanquished, accounts for the blaze of desperate and defiant patriotism in which Hitlerism was born. It may even account for the self-protective racialism of the movement. But it does not account for the bitter animosity to the Jews. And it is for the treatment of the Jews that we are most frequently urged to condemn Hitlerism. So Steele sets himself

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to investigate the vexatiousness of the Jew in Germany—and throughout the ages.

He does not believe that Jews are inherently different from Gentiles. They are a people of mixed origins, mainly Levantine; their racial purity is as much a falsehood as the racial purity of the "Nordics." What holds them together is a tradition, Biblical, Talmudic and economic. Solidarity has been forced upon them by the hostility their tradition invoked. It is a tradition that stresses acquisitiveness. They are more alert about property, money and the power of money than the run of mankind; they are brighter and cleverer with money. They get, they permeate, they control. The non-Jewish populations amidst which they live do not admit any inferiority to them; they feel that this successful Jewish concentration is made at the expense of broader and finer interests, of leisure, brooding contemplation and experiment. But if they are to hold their own against the biological pressure of the Jew they must drop these alleged broader and finer interests, whatever they are, and concentrate on the struggle for possession. The Jew makes the biological pace for

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them at a lower level, unless they impose a handicap on him or resort periodically to some form of pogrom. He grips the property, he secures the appointment. The Gentile feels he is robbed of opportunity by all this alertness. He is baffled and he gives way to anger.

Steele weighs this indictment. It is the very core of the Jewish trouble. Are the Jews more pushful than non-Jews? Does their energy in the attainment of opportunity block the way to slower but sounder and deeper accomplishment? He embarks upon a study of Jewish music, Jewish painting, Jewish science, the Jewish influence on drama, on the films. He disentangles instances and comes to the incidental conclusion that there are a number of Gentiles who are "Jewish" in their quality, and a number of Jews who are not. It is a matter of method and spirit. But on the whole he thinks we are dealing here with *a distinctive tradition of behaviour* that taints, hampers, and frustrates much human effort. The Jew is not a good citizen in this sense, that he does not give a whole-hearted allegiance to the institutions, conventions and collective interests and movements

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of the community in which he finds himself. Neither is he creative in the common interest. He is an alien with an alien mentality, and the achievement of "spoiling the Egyptians" lurks at the fountain-head of his ideology. His acquisitive keenness, his concentration upon attainment, his disregard of sentimental and ultimate standards, is in a large part due to the way in which his alien tradition releases him from "playing the game" of the community life simply and completely.

You may repudiate and fight against the clumsy revengefulness, the plunderings, outrages and fantastic intimidations of the Nazi method, but that does not close the Jewish problem for you. It merely brings you back to the fundamental age-long problem of this nation among the nations, this in-and-out mentality, the essential parasitism of the Jewish mycelium upon the social and cultural organisms in which it lives.

This is a problem for Jews to consider and solve for themselves. So far they have not faced up to it however urgently it has been thrust upon them. These are hard sayings for a consciously, an almost

professionally persecuted people, but they have to be said.

The Jewish world suffers very gravely from what one may call its Professional Champions, men who live by exacerbating the stresses between Jew and Gentile, and promoting unjust and unwise boycotts and vindictive discriminations. They are a natural and very unfortunate by-product of the conflict of ancient loyalties with modern generousities. They trade on the conservative influence of dear and picturesque associations. Every criticism of Jewish tradition is magnified by these mischief-makers into an attack on the race, and everyone who opposes an intense isolationism is denounced as the malignant enemy of a sacred and eternal tradition. They bring social pressure to bear upon every Jew who falters in his racial solidarity and cultural orthodoxy. Their clamour will not allow Jew and Gentile to adjust to any broader synthesis. All ease of intercourse between Jew and Gentile is destroyed by their activities. The Jewish racial consciousness is over-sensitized, and the Gentile writer who wishes to escape from the systematic hostility and detraction of a large and influential

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section in the literary world, is urged to exaggerated and exasperating suppressions—until he loses patience and explodes. His explosion is good business for the Professional Champion, who can then boast he has “unmasked” another “enemy” of the race. It is good business for the Professional Champion, but it is very bad business indeed for the Jewish community. We see quite typically this process at work in the case of Steele. We can watch his irritation grow at the Jewish reception of his universalism. “Am I a Gibeonite,” he says in one note. “Why is every liberal thinker expected to be subservient to Jewish reaction?” At last we find him writing of Zionism in a tone of frank exasperation.

“We shall never have peace between nations, races and individuals, nor in our public nor our private lives, until we throw over these Champions who insist on ‘standing up’ for us,” he wrote in another place. “‘Championship’ is a real and powerful factor in the frustration of human unity. The Jewish case is only one instance of a world-wide nuisance.”

“The universalism of Jewry,” he says in another

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memorandum, "must come from within, can only come from within, and all external persecution, violence and counter-boycotting of the Jews as a race or a religion is barbaric, foredoomed to futility and bound to decivilize the persecutor, but this must not bar Gentile writers from the frankest and most searching criticism of the many narrowing and reactionary elements still disagreeably active in the Jewish tradition. Jews write Gentile history and criticize Gentile institutions, and they have no right whatever to object to the converse process. A man may have the fullest apprehension of the great history and exceptional quality of the Jews, he may have the utmost liking and admiration for individual Jews and for Jewish types and traits, he may want to get together with Jews in every possible way, and still regard Zionism and cultural particularism as a blunder and misfortune for them and for mankind."

In one surprising passage Steele argues that the German National Socialist movement is essentially Jewish in spirit and origin, it is Bible-born, an imitation of Old Testament nationalism. The Jews have been taxed with most sins but never before

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with begetting the Nazi. But Steele writes of it as if it were self-evident. National Socialism, he declares, is inverted Judaism, which has retained the form of the Old Testament and turned it inside out. Hitler never made a speech yet that could not be rephrased in Bible language. Only a Bible-saturated people in these days, a people ignorant in the mass of modern biology and general history, could take so easily to national egotism, to systematic xenophobia, to self-righteous ideas of conquest and extermination. The German mind, never a very subtle or critical one, the copious abounding German mind, was poisoned in the Lutheran schools. The preservation of the Bible as a book sacred beyond criticism has kept alive a tradition of barbaric cunning and barbaric racialism, generation after generation, to the infinite injury of economic and political life.

In another passage Steele makes something between an appeal to and a lamentation upon "grievance stricken peoples." He dwells upon the dash and brilliance of so many young Irishmen, the alert nimbleness of the young Indian, the immense power and penetration of so many young Jews.

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“Why will they never forget the blunders and injustice done them by people as often as not duller than themselves? Why do they narrow themselves down to be vindictive? Why do these ancient defeats bar them from modern creativeness? Why do they refuse to be men among men? Why specialize in Erin or Mother India or Palestine, when the whole world is our common inheritance? *Come out of Israel!*”

With perfect candour Steele admits that the genuine man of science and every advocate of the socialist world state, are in a dissentient parallel position to the Jew's. The difference is that while the latter harks back to an extremely antiquated divinity and history and is saturated with an unjustifiable racial conceit, the modern liberal gives his allegiance to a universal order still to be attained. He works for the future of all mankind and not for an inassimilable tribal survival. The Catholic church, again, Islam and the Communist Party are also, in varying scope and measure, imperative cults antagonizing the loyalty of their adherents to the legal states in which they live. The Nazis, whatever their mental faults, have at

least the merit of clear-headedness in this that they recognize the militant quality of these cults and their incompatibility with their own entirely false and silly national ideal of a new Chosen People which Germany has so passionately adopted. "This new beast in the arena of error cannot possibly live at peace with the old beasts." But that, he adds, is no reason why we should take sides with the old beasts.

Human life, Steele insists, so far as its economic and political aspects go, is now a fight between all these general or partial theories of life and ways of social living. It is a fight which he believes can end only in the complete ascendancy of the liberal socialist world-organization and its necessary mentality. But it is a fight. And in a fight that hardness of purpose which under strain passes so readily into cruelty, must prevail over that gentleness which passes so easily into inaction and cowardice. The insidious attack must be met subtly, but the only adequate reply to violence is force. A man who is not a fighting man is not much good to world civilization at the present time. The tolerant man, the gentle man, is as bad as a policeman who walks away.

Frustration through Self-Indulgence

ANOTHER "issue of more or less" that reduced Steele to inconclusiveness, was that of self-discipline and austerity. Just as he hated inflicting mental or bodily pain and yet was obliged to argue in favour of hard determination rather than gentleness and charity in political and social conflicts, so in spite of his habitual easiness of behaviour, he was led by his instinct for consistency, to advocate a concentrated and ascetic life. Do not live at large, do not live for the moment, diffusedly and dissipatedly. "Find the thing in you that is essentially your individual thing," he reasons, "and make your life the quintessence of that. Sacrifice everything to that."

Qualms of doubt assail him. There appears a nightmare of a life not simply priggish but rigid, lonely as a hermit's and joining on to nothing. He thinks of the alternations of work and rest, effort and relaxation, and his mind goes back to those emotional and sentimental troubles which

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interwove so closely with his intellectual life. Like St. Paul, he shows himself half turned towards a life of abstinence and more particularly is he turned away from that "tragi-comedy of love in which we seem to come so close to another human being and remain at such an infinite distance." "Be concentrated in your purpose and diffused in your personal love." Then he reverts to his idea of alternations in conduct. Inconsistency, unfaithfulness not only to others but to ourselves may be in the very texture of our beings. "Perhaps there is no straight line of behaviour for any living thing, perhaps it is better to come back continually to your essential point than to try to stay there." Then he launches out into an entirely characteristic theory of oscillation in behaviour and in life at large. You must hunt and then eat, you must wake and then sleep, gather and then spend. Being is rhythm.

But rhythm is neither casualness nor fortuity. A beam of light is a complex of oscillations but it travels according to its direction. He tries out phrases like "mitigated austerity" and "irregularity under control." And then he gives way to

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impatience. "Here again I cannot escape from issues of more and less. I have to balance and the effect exhausts me. I stagger and stumble between Too Much and Enough and Deprivation. I am good and bad. I am a good worker and a self-indulgent slacker. I am effective and frustrated. *Homo Sum.*"

"I suppose," he writes with obvious reluctance, "when there is the slightest doubt it is better to be austere, just as when there is any hesitation in one's conflicts one should be hard." It is less easy to be frustrated by intentness than by laziness, looseness of will and pleasure. "I have wasted a few days of paralysis of purpose when I was tired, holding on when I should have let go for a time, but I seem to have wasted half the energy of my life upon flattering companionship and immediately agreeable things." Perhaps, he thinks, this is because he keeps an open mind—never locking it up with a dogma. "I have a lack of fanaticism." He compares the hard but effective life of a young Fascist or Nazi. Is it necessary to pith the brains with some narrow and preposterous doctrine and so kill the critical faculty before active consistency of living is possible?

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I realize, as I turn over this loose collection of notes, that Steele, whose general effect was one of geniality and insouciance, was in his private moments acutely dissatisfied and disappointed with himself and fundamentally an unhappy man. And there again I find him typical of our time.

*Frustration through the Lack
of a Liberal Morale*

IN his more fragmentary notes there is evidence that Steele remained extremely dissatisfied with his treatment of the riddle of the frustration of civilization. He blamed the liberal type of mind for gentleness, for fastidiousness, for obscurity of thought and expression, for pedantry and needless dissensions, for mutual distrust. "Why is there no generosity in liberalism?" he asks. He looked with envy at the working solidarity of the gangsters of America and of the gangster régimes in various European countries. He writes in one place of "the moral strength of combative stupidity." Throughout the world, practically the same conception of the desirable life takes shape in the minds of intelligent men of every race and tradition, the conception of a world-pax, a socialized economic life, of a rising level of liberty, opportunity, amplitude of living, of a world-synthesis of happy activities. It takes shape in their minds, but not in

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their acts and effects. And his answer to the riddle of this motor-paralysis is that there is at present no "liberal morale."

In the notes attached to this discussion, Steele has jotted down a disconcerting summary of the quarrels, jealousies and treacheries of "liberal" leaders, of their want of candour with one another and their profound doctrinaire distrusting. The stupid can co-operate loyally upon immediate objectives; the intelligentsia, it seems, cannot co-operate at all.

And I think if Steele had lived, the crown and culmination of his *Anatomy* would have been the detailed working out of the necessary ethic and the necessary conventional imperatives for this "Liberal Morale" of his, which should achieve at once personal and world salvation. He would have drawn upon the experiences of Jesuit and Puritan, Communist and Fascist, for direction in the New Beginning. He was very insistent that he did not want to produce any one uniform type of "liberal." He wanted co-operation and not uniformity. His "New Model" was to be a creative mechanism of many parts. One of his primary requirements was that "different sorts of liberal should understand

one another better." And they should also understand the need for law and order as a going condition. "The impatience of undisciplined and uncoordinated liberalism has wasted vast possibilities of creative liberal energy upon mere chaotic insurrectionism." Liberalism has to be as measured and restrained as it is hard and implacable. It is preferentially on the side of law and order, unless the law is arbitrary and the order mere coercion. Its final objective is the "candid exploratory, educational, socialist world-pax," sternly defended against malignancy.

Necessarily his prescription for the New Puritans who were to take the world in hand would have recapitulated much that had gone before in his *Anatomy*. There is a curious parallelism between the problems he was wrestling with and those which brought Oliver Cromwell to create the New Model. The Parliamentary armies and the city train-bands were no match for the romantic cavalry of the usurping and illegal autocracy, until Cromwell created his troops of sober and religious men. In the modern liberal we need more of the Ironside and less of the artistic temperament. The

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backbone of a continuing creative revolution in the world must be sober and religious men and women—even though their religion is stripped down to that bare psychological adjustment to which Steele's analysis reduced all his assembled creeds. They must be wary of pleasure, they must be in sound training and sexually self-controlled. Their imaginations must be lit and sustained by habitual close contact with scientific work. Their habit of mind must be critical. They must be educated in the scientific outlook as the old Puritans were educated in the Bible. . . .

As Steele recapitulates these characteristics to which his analysis has led him, I seem to see his New Model marching by—like a procession by Mantegna. They are engineers and aviators, explorers, navigators, architects, laboratory workers, teachers, doctors of mind and body, administrators, keepers of the peace, guardians and nurses, makers and artists, cultivators and miners, men of the forge and men of the forest, tamers of animals and conservators of life. And then I find myself echoing Steele's amazement. Why is there now no Liberal Morale? Why do

not these grave and magnificent people rule the world to-day? "Tell them," writes Steele, "and tell them. Call upon them. Call them again and again. Create a real political science and apply it. Create a living and searching criticism of political conduct and social interaction to bind all these fine types together in a common purpose, so that the lovely work they do will not become in the aggregate a heap of waste."

And in another place he has written, "Co-ordination, mutual understanding, is the first duty of modern liberalism. The disavowal of providential guidance, of mystical democracy, of a mystic belief in progress, must be the first article of its high and stoical creed."

And once one has caught a glimpse of this march-past, this Mantegna frieze, of Steele's New Model, the vision grows plainer. These new moderns will be understanding, co-ordinated, resolute; they will be merciful but not foolishly gentle. On occasion they will kill. They must not hesitate to kill, without trial or ceremony, any mad dog that ravages the world. They will kill without delay or compunction every political

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adventurer who menaces the common order or liberty. It is to the world of a scientific Brutus and not to the world of Imperial Cæsar that human reason moves. Patience with legal forms when they are perverted or abused, patience with all usurpation, is the supreme surrender of life.

I had a dream the other night of these men and women, very deliberate and implacable, walking steadily out of these speculations of Steele's and saving the life of the world. They will not make formal conspiracies, they will organize no secret societies; the business of pass-words and counter-signs and mutual intimidation is the method of the feebler folk. They will do their work of liberation alone or by twos and threes, held together by nothing but the common understanding of rational men.

These are times of tyranny and suppression, when the private judgment must be the ultimate court of law with powers of life and death. The loudest upstart, the grimmest bully nowadays must sooner or later hand himself over to the man of knowledge and judgment. The needle and the scalpel, the aeroplane and the gun, are for the

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hands that can use them. The political oaf, the modern dictator with a gang or a mob behind him, is merely a destructive intruder in the human laboratory. We owe him no loyalty. He has to be got rid of, anyhow.

The duty of the man of knowledge and judgment is to mankind. He cannot divest himself of the power that should make him the judge and executioner of lawless aggression. He is not a trained dog to do tricks for his inferiors; he is not a saddled beast to answer to the rein. He is Man; his science is the mind of Man and his opportunity is the measure of his duty.

The distinctive quality of a modern liberal morale is the absolute refusal, even when rules have to be observed or mass action undertaken, to surrender individual responsibility. The modern liberal may observe conventions and the rule of the road, obey without question the orders of doctor, engineer or other trusted guide, follow maps and signposts, but always with his eyes open. He waives his personal decision for the sake of Man in him. But it is a provisional waiver. He is responsible for his obedience and for the conse-

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quences of his obedience. While he stands by the tyrant or serves the mob he is still fully responsible. They can never master him while his inner integrity remains. This partly explains why liberalism, though it can be so overwhelmed at times by demagoguery and mob contagion, is nevertheless so irrespressible and recuperative. In the hour of defeat it is already beginning again. As it dies with X it is born again in Y. Every scattered particle of shattered civilization is germinal and begins to restore itself. Civilization is always increasing and always beginning again.

*Frustration by Sinfulness.
The Seven Deadly Sins*

HIS tenth volume really completes Steele's survey of what we may call the general frustration of mankind. For our present world-wide frustrations he has found explanations in a general confusion of thought and instruction, in our inadequately conceived schemes for world order and social justice, in impatience, in presumption, in our immense far-reaching ignorance, in our educational lag. Now in the eleventh volume he comes back to his beginnings in the first volume, to the antithesis between the mortal and the immortal in man.

In that opening he argues that all religion, morality, patriotic and social sacrifice, can be traced to Man's realization of the inadequacy of what he called his "natural" life. The natural cycle of man in favourable conditions, Steele says, is birth, childhood, adolescence, rivalry, sexual desire, sexual achievement, a phase of adult social activity with vitality changing from a livelier to a

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steadier form, and then decline. Nature has had what she wants of you, and now she puts you aside. Each phase is ruled by its appropriate desires and all desires are overloaded with energy, so that each tends to exceed its ends and enlarge and distort the life-cycle with secondary achievements. It is because Nature over-does herself in this way, that man has emerged from the limited life of a ground ape to his present biological predominance. His curiosity has been excessive and he has gathered a huge and ever-growing equipment of knowledge. He has broken the bounds of tribe and pack. He lives far longer than his teeth and combative energy. His excessive sensibilities have given him music, decoration and representative art. The excitements of sex and conflict leave him dissatisfied and unfulfilled, and he has become conscious of death and greedy for limitless living. So that the old round of the original life-cycle goes on within the larger interests of his exuberant being, and laws and religions, customs and education, make an uneasy adjustment between the core, the life-giving core, of primordial animalism and the super-self that has grown and gathered about it.

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And because of the alternation of our moods between the intenser and the broader life, the life of strong impulses and the life of permanent values, we live inconsistently, perplexed continually by ourselves and everyone about us.

Every religious teacher, every Solon, everyone who has tried to live religiously and consistently, has found this discordance of moods and impulses his primary working problem. The discord is what the theologians call Sin, and the lists of sins, as this or that religion has defined them, become, from the biological point of view, a map of the disputed territory, and a plan of the warfare between the life of the Greater Man in us fighting to save us from frustration, and the "natural" individual life.

And from these general propositions our Encyclopædic Anatomist launches himself upon another vast sketchy summary. He calls this volume simply "Sin." Nothing, he declares, in the whole spectacle of human vagueness, has been written about so copiously, so emptily and with so much fear and excitement. He attempts some clarifications about Original Sin, the Seven Deadly Sins,

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Mortal Sin, Venial Sin, Bunyan's Burthen and what "cleansing from sin" means in this or that theological system. He raids into primitive psychology, and searches for a plausible biological explanation of the sense of sin. He correlates sin and uncleanness and sin and infection.

He is persuaded that the elementary form of the sense of sin, is simply fear that a mistake has been made entailing unpleasant consequences. This in an educated animal like a dog or man, is mixed up with the fear of punishment by the parent or the pack. With mental elaboration, this becomes a sense of wrongness, of being under a merited curse. It may involve prostration of spirit to the level of despair. Young children have an uneasy feeling that their parents know practically everything; you may detect the same feeling towards yourself in the eye of your dog; and so we have Conscience. Ideas of taboos and magic penalties proliferated in the expanding human cerebrum. They brought with them possibilities of panic cruelty. The fear factors in the sense of sin are the more primordial and the intenser, but superimposed upon them in the expanding human intelligence is

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the distress of conscious inconsistency and ultimate frustration.

In the past century or so there has been an immense release of the human imagination from the fear of sin. We may be inordinately discontented with our lives and our capacities, but the feeling of being vindictively pursued has been lifted from us. Just as Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* records a phase of utter hopelessness and will-prostration in human thought, so the great "punishment religions"—the "hell creeds"—embody the spirit of a defeated and propitiatory age, a long long age it was, in the story of the human imagination. But with the increase of power and the extension of security, and with the realization of the possibility of a still more extended security and a limitless abundance, man has risen from his prostrations, got up from his knees, dared to stand up to his universe and look it in the eye. He may feel at times like an amateur hunter who faces an elephant which may charge at any moment, but he no longer feels that he is bound to a rack, the helpless victim of an arbitrary indictment.

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It may be, Steele suggests, that the reaction against the sense of sin may have gone too far. We cannot afford to give up heart-searching. It is one thing to deny that, except for mercy and magical propitiations, we are damned here and hereafter, but it is an equal and opposite exaggeration to rebel against all restrictions and call a glorious release for every impulse. Considerable masses, classes and types of people are living nowadays in a state of moral slackness and impulsive licentiousness, for which there is no rational justification.

Steele frames his suggestions for a modern moral code in a discussion of the Seven Deadly Sins. He has much more respect for the Catholic Church than for the Hebrew barbarians and their Ten Commandments. "Compared with the rude fundamentalism of Judaism," he writes, "the teachings of the Catholic Church render an immeasurably greater mass of human experience." These Seven were a competent attempt in their time to map the provinces of human misbehaviour. They are Sins in our nature and we spell them with a capital letter to distinguish them from the misdeeds they produce when sins are actually committed.

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He takes them by groups. First come the sins of the natural bodily appetites, *lust* and *gluttony*. In these sins we find old Nature at her inevitable trick of over-doing an urgency. There is nothing wrong in the appetite for food. Sexual desire and a preference for agreeable food are normal parts of the life-cycle, and, so far as sexual impulse goes, one might almost say the objective of growth. What were the mental conditions that raised the excess of these essential impulses to the dignity of primary Sins? Taking the less complicated case first, Steele deals with gluttony. He finds the sinfulness of this lies in the frustration of the broader life by loss of fitness and energy. Gluttony is a "hoggish preoccupation," an appetite become an obsession, it is "a bad habit of desire." Beyond that he has little to say that seems to me to go beyond moral platitudes, except for one other comment that I found rather shrewd. It is this, that when "gluttony" was defined as a major Sin, people were living at a comparatively barbaric level. There was no supply of stupefying or exciting drugs, there was no opium, there were no spirits, there was little continuous strain and fatigue.

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Hunger abounded and could be perverted, but the hundred-and-one possibilities of developing cravings that exist to-day were practically unknown. Steele would substitute for gluttony "disproportionate cravings" of all but the sexual appetites. The brandy drinker, the opium or cocaine maniac would all come into this class of sinner. The test is "fitness." Steele therefore would replace this deadly Sin by another of a wider scope which would comprehend whatever indulgence keeps us from being as "fit" as we should otherwise be.

He approaches lust in the same spirit. But then very soon he gets into a tangle. Gluttony leaves its victim wheezing and done-for by the wayside, and there is an end to him. But lust goes deeper into the human make-up and ramifies through us so as to touch our egotism, our pride and our vision in the world. You cannot draw a definite boundary between a lustful impulse and the general will-system of a human being. Moralists have been working at that demarcation for three or four millennia. "Much of this," writes Steele at last, "I can only deal with—from above downwards—when I write of love," and having made this

postponement of half his perplexities, he settles down to one of the most evaded questions of our time, the question whether sexual abstinence is compatible with full health and efficiency, and how far the sexual drive can be deflected, sublimated or perverted without essential individual frustration. This is not "a matter of opinion." We, as a community, as "an atmosphere of approval and disapproval," ought to know. There may be individual differences in this respect but Steele is as convinced of their fundamental triviality as he is that, in effect, we could all think alike. Here is an issue of fact of the gravest importance to modern behaviour, and we are entitled to far more explicit instructions from psychology and physiology than we get.

He does not leave us in any doubt about his own convictions in this matter. He disbelieves in the Christian virtue of Continence altogether. He will not have this fretting and distraught condition a virtue. It is "a negative vice." It is the resort of a morally lazy soul. Origen's self-mutilation is the awful example of this kind of evasion. A candid medical profession should be able to tell us what

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are, at different ages and for different temperaments, the limits of the optimum of sexual satisfaction. (But at present, he adds in parenthesis, this most pretentious and incompetent of defensively organized professions, cannot even tell us about dietary.) What constitutes deprivation; what excess? There must be a norm. When we know that much, says Steele, then we can take up the problems of sexual behaviour with far more certitude than at present. He is very definitely sure that there is a distinctive sexual morality for every decade in a human life, but here again he does not follow up his suggestion immediately.

And having expanded Gluttony and given Lust a remand, Steele turns for a time to a modernist treatment of the remaining five of the Seven Deadly Sins.

Covetousness and Envy, the next of the Seven he examines, lie at the root of most of our economic frustration. But they extend further than that, to prestige, posts, affections, personal accomplishments. They correspond to one another like a passive and active mood; Covetousness, he thinks, is defensive and born of fear, and Envy of natural

biological rivalry. Most of the acts that hamper the candid development of just economic organization arise from the play of these two natural sins. But he would extend them to cover various phobias that the Christian moralists seem to have disregarded, xenophobia and class hatred, for example. He throws out a suggestion that these two sins might be brought together with those omitted ungraciousnesses under the general title of "Fear and Hatred from the Self Outward." About Anger he has little to say that has not been said before by countless moralists. He talks of self-examination and is inclined to think that the science of psychoanalysis may be of enormous value to us in anticipating and controlling the release of violence. We have more self-knowledge and self-control than our ancestors. We are learning more and more not to "let ourselves go." Not only are we being better trained to subdue the impulsive man to the immortal man in the case of angry outbreaks, but as we develop conceptions of a competent economic organization, world peace and fair play upon which everyone can rely, the poison is drawn away from acquisitiveness and envy.

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Next he comes to Sloth. And therewith he breaks into praise of Christianity for having made sluggishness a Deadly Sin. All the constructive drive in his nature responds to this condemnation of the slacker. No one can doubt, he says, that the teachers of Christianity were in good faith when they denounced lack of strenuousness—for see to what trouble it led them! Strenuousness was bound to clash with the virtues of continence and obedience. He becomes disconcertingly searching in his attempts to define the extent of Accidie. Everything that contradicts the intensity and concentration of living he would make a sin for his Illuminati. He tolerates no “evasions of living.” He finds it logical to condemn games beyond the needs of wholesome exercise. The whole of this section of the volume on Sin makes good confused reading. It is a helter-skelter onslaught upon the general aimlessness of our common occupations and entertainments. It is a scrutiny of the texture of our days. Reading detective stories, cross-word puzzles, fly-fishing, bridge and the life of contemplation, for example, small and great evasions of responsible life, are put under the microscope

—with scores of other uses for time. They are seized upon, questioned and placed. It is like a schoolmaster coming back into a neglected classroom and striking right and left. It is like a press gang in Vanity Fair.

And having praised Catholicism extravagantly for its exaltation of urgency and intensity, he falls foul of it altogether for making a sin of Pride. Making Pride a sin is due to the "fallacy of orthodoxy," to that blindness which does not recognize in every human effort the preparations for a Next Beginning. The last thing that Teachers and Priests will learn is to let their disciples think. So foremost of the Ten Commandments come dire threatenings of anyone who dares to think beyond the early Hebrew idea of God, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me"; and so the Christian theologian, baffled by incessant doubts and questionings, attempts a similar bludgeoning of mental enterprise by making intellectual integrity a deadly sin.

For Steele, Pride, the Pride that stands up against the whole universe and says, "in my place and moment, I am Man, militant and ascendant,

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Man who decides, Man the master of his fate,"
—for Steele that is the supreme virtue.

In the end he leaves us with Four Deadly Sins; firstly, "indulgence of appetites to the detriment of fitness and the distraction of energy"; secondly, "self-centred fear and competitive hatred which make us hoard and hide and grasp and injure"; thirdly, anger, and fourthly, sloth. To fall under the sway of any one of these sins is "personal frustration," and that sort of frustration may come to the individual, however perfect the social order, however just and plentiful we make the economic life.

Frustration through Loneliness and the Craving for a Lover

(a)

*Projected Atlas, History, Gazetteer and
Case Book of Love*

TEN volumes and a half-volume were printed of the *Anatomy of Frustration* before Steele died, and he had also issued five detached "Parts" in pamphlet form. Besides this more or less orderly material there remained a quantity of ill-arranged and undigested matter, some of it set up in type—he liked to work on printed galleys—some of it in typescript and some of it mere manuscript notes. His intention seems to have been to make up this matter into at least three volumes of very unequal size dealing respectively with Love, Art and Individuality.

The "Love" accumulation is by far the bulkiest, and I will deal with it first. It is essentially a confused and intricate examination of loneliness. He raises a thicket of issues and to many readers

it will seem that he gets nowhere. But I do not know of anyone else in the world who gets further than he does, and at any rate, his efforts do seem to state many of these issues with a certain fresh neatness.

The gist of it all is that he felt lonely and did not like to feel lonely. It robbed him of zest and energy to feel lonely; it lowered his efficiency. And he realized that this ache of loneliness which coloured so many of his mental states and accounted for much of his practical ineffectiveness was not peculiar to himself, that to have these moods is the common lot of actively intelligent people in the world to-day.

What is it that is sought to assuage this loneliness? Is the desire for this assuagement also among the frustrated cravings of our time? The ordinary way of putting it is that we want to love and be loved. He attempts an analysis of these terms. Gradually he develops an idea of the psychology of this love business, an idea upon which he was still working up to his end. He called this idea the Idea of the Lover-Shadow. Presently I shall quote three passages of his verbatim. He is very much obsessed by the

fact that the active modern type of mind demands and needs *response* in the world, that it cannot carry on life effectively without response, that it is eager for response and that it can be very easily misled and entangled and frustrated by inadequate responses.

In his preceding volumes he had gradually built up his conception of a new liberalism, persistently aggressive in method, constructive, creative and in spirit disciplined and puritanical. A New Model with a new education and a new morale marched out of his speculations with an air of logical necessity. These were to be the men and women who would rule the future. Now he had to take up the question of their personal relationships and mutual reactions. What rôle had love and pairing and sensuous, emotional and sentimental intimacies to play in their lives?

And for his twelfth volume, this naïve Encyclopædist projected nothing less than a review and scrutiny of Love. In all its aspects. Through all the ages.

The simple reasonableness of his project is only equalled by its colossal impossibility. Already in his opening volume, as I have told, he had had the

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temerity to attempt a quintessence of all philosophies and religions. So now, on all fours with that tremendous effort, he starts out in this twelfth volume to express the juice from all the love romances and poetry that the human heart has ever produced. What a volume it would have been had he completed it!

He does recognize the need here for a few sentences of justification. He declares he is doing nothing extraordinary in clutching at everything available in this way. He is only doing on paper, with an attempt at permanency, what every sane man does in his head. It does not matter, he declares, how disproportionate, endless and overwhelming the accumulation of expression and recorded experience about love may be, every man does in effect for his own practical purposes pass judgment upon it all. We all make what we can of the monstrous jumble. We must. Every response in one's life implies a judgment in these matters, however inadequate and provisional that judgment may be. We are all "amateur encyclopædists" and there is no escaping it. (He might have said this earlier.)

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His preceding volumes have made it plain that he includes under religion all that determines rightness in behaviour for us. Now he defines love. Love, he says, is "the entire system of emotional urgencies that dispose us to correlate and merge our individual interests with those of other individuals, to become dependent upon these other individuals for our contentment and happiness, and to demand a corresponding, manifested and convincing merger of their interests in our own." It is a compound of self-abandonment and unlimited annexation. It is a giving and a taking and from both aspects it breaks down the isolation of the self. We break out from ourselves towards other individual persons or things.

I read over his formula after I have copied it down. The definition reads cold-blooded to me and yet I cannot better it. It is strange, as any dictionary will testify, how undefined love is, seeing that it is responsible for most of our poetry and drama and a large part of the rest of literature.

In the margin I find in almost illegible pencil this: "Love is a clumsy search for an enduring

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dear companionship into which the primitive lust prowls has developed."

"Love," he throws out incidentally, "always carries something of its opposite with it, as a green lamp reddens the shadow it casts. It urges us to abandon ourselves and at the same time it arouses an internal resistance to its own urgency. It expects and it distrusts."

He makes a sort of classification of these "emotional urgencies" all "green shot with red," according to their intensity, duration and extent of application. At one end of the scale is "falling in love" when we are consumed with the desire for a mutual absorption in a single other human being, normally of the opposite sex; at the other are phases in which our appreciation of our fellow-creatures is "diffused." Then we appreciate widely, we respond widely and seek a wide response, seeking neither to monopolize nor be monopolized. All lives, he says, like natural rivers, pass sometimes swiftly and intensely through narrows and rapids and broaden sometimes into tranquil streams and lagoons. And it is quite in character that this metaphor should carry him on to the idea that

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the fully civilized modern life will ultimately canalize us out of the gorges and intensities of the romantic love adventure altogether. He sets himself to argue the case between "a welcomed and cherished love fixation" on the one hand, and a "deliberate, good-mannered, large-minded promiscuity" on the other.

He argues to and fro because he is obviously troubled and uncertain in his own mind about it. Nowhere else is he so much the dissatisfied explorer. He has a bias against his own convictions. He is divided against himself. Manifestly Steele was disposed imaginatively for an "exclusive love," life in duet form—which his critical intelligence refused to endorse. All the great religions, he says, have set their faces against the intensely personal lover, and advocated renunciation and celibacy for their saints. But none of them, except in a very faint-hearted fashion, have tolerated a "saving dispersedness."

There is much of the disillusioned lover in his reasoning about that "saving dispersedness."

He has already charged St. Paul with disingenuousness about immortality; he now glances

curiously at that "Charity" of his. After all, he asks, did the pagan world put an unjust interpretation upon the love-feasts of the early Christians? Did the early Christians at some phase attempt "an orgiastic suppression of jealousy?" He supplements his discussion here with an account of the early Oneida community, and an essay on the "group marriage" of Plato's Guardians. Strict mating narrows a human being down below the level of broad social usefulness, and leads to tragedies of mutual tyranny and jealousy; abstinence is punished by morbid obsessions; a "qualified catholicity" is perhaps the path of reason. Men and women may come to live not as twin stars but in constellations.

The biological reasons for strict mating, in the case of the larger, more individualized animals, are fairly obvious. The position of the human animal is peculiar. It has an emotional and sentimental disposition to "mate", like a lion or tiger. And also it has wanderings of the imagination. It has been "socialized" from the small family group of the other Primates in a few score thousand years. It is an adaptable animal. Strict mating is compatible

with the isolated lair but not with an open society. The savage, the small farmer, the small shopkeeper, the conspirator and the criminal, "intensive individualists," need "a concentrated mate." They are forest apes living in the social forest; society for them is not an organization but a jungle. But amidst the amplifying security and candour and the wholesale services of the modern state, there is not the same justification for a "comprehensive completeness of association."

The complementary shadow of intensive love is exclusiveness and intense jealousy. When we want to give completely we want to possess completely. We want to shut ourselves in from the rest of the race. We may do that temporarily—"as a phase in a relationship we are elaborating." The pack, in the case of some types of wolf and wild dog, disperses into pairs in the mating season. But we cannot, he insists, construct a modern civilized life on permanently mated lines. George Meredith suggested a ten year duration of marriage. Biologically, Steele can find no reason for the prolongation of marriage beyond fifteen years from the birth of the last child. Do old gentlemen and old

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ladies want to live together closely? he asks, and searches fiction, biography, criminal records and his own ruthless observations for an answer.

So runs Steele's "biological" argument against the still glowing traditions of romantic faithfulness and lifelong mutual devotion. In the following section he begins all over again and attempts an independent psycho-analytic approach to this love business. He is evidently conscious that there is something missing in his strictly biological interpretation of love. There is a great mental resistance to diffusedness. Why? We want to specialize imaginatively even if we do not specialize practically. We choose and we are easily stirred to choose intensely. Why is this? He turns a term of Jung's to his own needs. Jung calls the figure we make of ourselves in our imaginations for the purposes of behaviour, the *Persona*. Steele declares that this *Persona* is never sure of itself and always hungry for confirmation of its cherished insecure self-respect. This confirmation is what women demand when they complain they are not "understood."

Jung has thrown out a fantasy that the Lover is a

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sort of exciting contrast to the Persona, with all the qualities ejected from the Persona; but Steele will have none of that. Steele's Lover is the Persona-Shadow; the shadow that makes the Persona seem solid and real. It may be complementary but it is not necessarily so. Essentially it is confirmatory. We are all seeking that confirmatory shadow. The essential craving is not for completion but endorsement. One of the great functions of a lover is to tell us we are "all right," to keep us feeling we are "all right." This assurance cannot be given by casually encountered lovers. It can be done with full effectiveness only by a chosen person who has chosen to specialize in this mutual service. At times Steele writes as though he thought this imaginative necessity the very core of love. When the lover shows that he or she sees coldly and plainly, then the love affair has finished.

Apart from the aberrant suggestions of imaginative elaboration, the endless exceptional oddities the sexual impulse can assume, there are, Steele considers, six main systems of motive at work in the tangle which produces our love-behaviour:

The recurrent craving for sexual completion.

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The lingering dependence of childhood, the need we feel to be mothered or fathered. We are lonely and to relieve our agoraphobia we want to nestle into someone protective.

The craving for a dependent—the need to mother or father someone which will give us in return a sense of power.

The craving for sympathy and imaginative response, the “Persona-Shadow.” The craving, that is, for a friendly interested audience. (The love-letters of many people are better than their love.)

The practical need for a loyal ally in all sorts of matters, for “partnerships without bookkeeping,” in which there is more than a mere give-and-take of services, in which there is an emotional tie.

And ruling over all this tangle of motives is the strong irrational disposition, strengthened by tradition and usage, to concentrate the fulfilment of all these needs in one single “possessed” person of the opposite sex who is “*my man*,” or “*my woman*.” It is an exaggeration and misapplication of the natural mating instinct.

The biological justifications for that disposition

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to concentrate upon one person are plain enough. And old Nature, having got her end by concentrating us, cares little what becomes of us afterwards. She clutches us into a crisis, squeezes out of us what she is after and throws us aside. We love and tear the sky down to unite. And at length to every love-story comes the morning after. Men and women, unlike those split quadrupeds of Aristophanes (in the *Symposium*), are not made in reciprocal pairs. There is some misfit in every mating just as there is a marginal error in every logical process—a little rift within the lute.

Steele, in the end, comes out very plainly with his reasoned convictions about right conduct, and inferentially about the relaxed and flexible social institutions in which this right conduct should be easy. Marriage for him would be a terminable contract and of various types. Legal marriage should exist only to protect the unforeseeing, the inexperienced and the unborn, from material injury. Love many people, says Steele. Keep broad. Keep on the upland. Do not slip down the cliffs into the cañon. The aim of the intelligent life is to be Man. Do not lapse back to narrow individualism. All

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the time you may want to give yourself away completely and to have your lover give himself or herself completely to you. Do not attempt it. It cannot be done. Love man but not a man, love woman but not a woman. At times you will want most desperately that it should be otherwise. That ecstasy of self-abandon is a delusion. You may desire it so much as to pretend. Break away, and then, if you will, return freely. You will return to what is congenial. If two people are indeed "made for each other," as the saying goes, what need is there for vows? If interests make you allies, let it be the interests and nothing else that bind you. To lock up love in a duality is in the end to frustrate it altogether.

Personal love, Steele insists, is not the crown of life. He insists on this with a curious faint flavour of regret, but he insists. The crown of life is the religious crown, "a proud realization of one's own share of divinity." This, I suppose, goes a long way towards what mystics would call Divine Love. But not all the way.

Before I leave this description of the torso of volume twelve—the first of the three final volumes

that were not printed and issued—I must add that the first, the bigger, more unwieldy part of it, with its abundant manuscript interpolations and printed cuttings, is not merely an account of love-literature in general. There are also sections devoted to the particular experiences of Steele and his friends and to, what shall I say? a collection of rather sedulously verified and closely analyzed scandals about his contemporaries. Obviously these sections cannot be printed for many years. Essentially they are stories of jealousy and the deceptions and disillusionments it causes. He wanted to get at the heart of the tangle, and an analysis of personal stories was the only way in which reality seemed, even remotely, attainable. There is no vitality in discussing these relationships, he feels, unless the individual instances are brought in. He was, we must remember, writing to think first of all and to publish afterwards or not as might be advisable.

“My own sexual history,” he writes, regardless of the feelings of his devoted Madame Stahl, “is a lamentable one. But then every sexual history in these ungracious days has its lamentable factors.”

Just how lamentable his experiences were will have to remain undeclared, but it does seem correct to say that Steele's career was a fairly ordinary and representative one. It is probably paralleled by myriads of contemporaries, male and female. In spite of the fact that Steele was intensely heterosexual his story in many respects is more like a woman's than a man's. He tells with great explicitness and a sort of involuntary humour how he fell in love with so-and-so or so-and-so. How dominant she became in his imaginations. How unreasonably he put her on a pedestal, trusted her extravagantly, expected limitless things from her; made a point of stressing his preference for her above all his other intimates. He expected too much, he promised too much; he bilked and was bilked. None of these chosen ladies could altogether resist his storm of worship and expectation. They felt the better for it; they felt splendid; and then he began, usually through some accidental shock, to "find them out." Then came reaction, recrimination, a phase of vindictiveness passing into indifference. Green and red fade out together; the love and anger pass. Almost every one of his episodes ends

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with some such remark as "we remain excellent friends."

Isn't that, in fact, the typical modern love story for men and women alike? Some of us play this popular tune with tin-whistles and some with a full orchestration, some of us lack the recuperative power to begin again easily and so their story has fewer chapters in it, but the sequence is the almost universal experience.

Here is one of his attempts to summarize the intimate truth about himself. "After all my reasoning I come to the fact that I am quite irrational here. What I want in my heart is a Personal, Intimate, Subservient, Devoted, Private Divinity, a genius like the genius of Socrates, a confidant who will not know what I want to conceal but will know whatever I want to have known. And somehow this has got to be embodied in an attractive, variable, interesting woman who will respond to my desire. I have never wanted a pet of a woman or an exhibitionist Venus to worship. I am no sort of impressario lover. I have wanted a strong, quietly animated goddess-slave. Or a strong, quietly animated slave-goddess. Mother-

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mate not mistress. With some mistress thrown in. Preposterous—yes. But this is how I am made. This is what I find I want when I go down into myself. And that is how I believe the hopes of most men go.

“Partly this is infantilism. But how many of the people about me share that sort of infantilism, this prolongation far into adult years of the unreasonable limitless demand of the newly born! Modern men and women remain more infantile than their ancestors. They are mentally larger but they are more infantile. I will not ask why this should be so now. They still cling to this desire for a concentrated personal embodiment of response.

“How many live disappointed lives because they never find that encircling, submissive and protective Lover! They recoil upon themselves and become misogynists or misanthropists, as the case may be. They ‘sublimate’ their desire and take refuge in an imagined divinity. Love is all about them in a thousand flashes and aspects and qualities and appeals that call for their response in love. But like barbarians who must crystallize their

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religion about a personal God or refuse to believe in divinity, they must crystallize their loving about a single individual lover or have none of it. The fallacious unifying personifying impulse that I outgrew in my religious life was still too strong for me in the control of my intimate emotional life."

In several other parallel passages he admits that he has never been able to subdue his example to his precept. He can be "Man" facing his universe, but however much he is resolved to "disperse" or "diffuse" love, he cannot "generalize" it, it insists upon remaining preferential, vivid and concrete, however episodic it becomes. There is no such thing as communal love; no love can be indifferent; it is a matter of preference and material reality from first to last.

"I want love that will glow through my being from the smallest thrill of sense to the utmost mental exaltation. And I want it *with* my lover and my lovers and through my love. I do not want to pass into an abstract sublimation and leave smell and sight and touch behind. I do not want to float up into the sky; I want the two of us to

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grow up to the sky with our bare toes still pressing firmly and happily into sunlit soil.”

Finally he comes out with something that seems almost to promise a reconciliation of his frank perplexity between the two primary strands of conscious human life. Love is personal always; inalterably preferential; it is an intensification of personality in ourselves and in our Lovers. It is the qualification, the corrective, of religious universalism. By religion we become Man, by love we remain individual, and as our religion rises and widens to the world community and the starry mind, so the subtlety of our appreciation of the individual difference in ourselves and others must intensify to keep pace with it.

In the margin Steele has pencilled: “Love and Religion, systole and diastole of personality? You must love mortally in order to be immortal, just as you must sleep well in order to be properly awake.” But the wider the mental reference the more people one must love and be loved by. “Cæsar cannot live with Cleopatra in a hermit’s cave.” The wider the life the more the individual responses must cluster upon it.

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And in a phrase, monopolization and renunciation (which is, after all, only negative monopolization) are the frustration of Love. They frustrate by exaggeration and concentration, just as gluttony does, or fear, or avarice, or anger.

The Idea of the Lover-Shadow

IN this volume on love, Steele develops a queer, rather elaborate theory about love which I find impossible to summarize and which I am reluctant to omit. His theory attracts me but it does not capture me. I think I shall do best by quoting two passages, in which he struggles with this idea of his, of a "Lover-Shadow" which is Heart's Desire. I make no apology for the repetition involved. He seems to be feeling his way towards some general explanation not only of *why* we seek lovers, but why we express and argue about ourselves with everyone who will tolerate us.

"Let me try to get a clear statement, in the most general terms possible, of this evasive practical riddle of this relationship of the Lover-Shadow to the Persona which is, so to speak, the drama of the individual life. With what varying solutions are we to attack this riddle? I am trying here to state the matter with fundamental simplicity and completely. If here I contradict, or seem to contradict

anything I have said before, any phrase I have used, so much the worse for what has gone before. Here I sum up, and disregarded pleadings must be counted as repudiated. First, then, the Persona is, in the most general terms, that conception of oneself which we form for the purpose of conduct, to judge and justify what we have done and what we apprehend of ourselves. We do not do this projection of ourselves deliberately. It is in the nature of the human animal to make a Persona. We make-up the Persona as far as possible for comfort, subconsciously, as a child not merely sits on but wriggles into a big chair. And in the most general terms, the Lover-Shadow is a reciprocal to our Persona, begotten out of our desire for effective endorsement, for expressed exterior approval of this Persona which we project for ourselves.

“Neither of these, neither Persona nor Lover-Shadow, is necessarily conceived of as a sexual individual. In beings like ourselves. The sexual aspect is only a leading aspect of these two. Conscious life is not fundamentally sexual—and the formula of—

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(A) *assertion*, followed by

(B) *reassurance*, which is attained through (B1) *actual* or (B2) *more or less delusive confirmation* or else instead of (B), (C) *frustration*, is the wider formula of conscious life.’’

(There Steele follows Adler rather than Freud.)

‘‘For instance, my Persona may include an intense insistence on some skill I possess—on mathematical precision and dexterity, for example, or an ability in playing tennis or fencing—and in correlation with that, the Lover-Shadow may appear and smile upon me, quite asexually, in perhaps an understanding review of some learned dissertation I have made, or in the applause of a bystander. We like and respond to that appreciation. My gratification by the caresses of a favourite cat which comes and makes much of me, again, belongs to my responses to the Lover-Shadow, as I am defining it here. My sense of my significance is enhanced. My Persona is invigorated.

‘‘For many people whose Persona goes far and wide, and who cannot find satisfactory responses in the behaviour of people about them, there is a strong temptation to assemble the Lover-Shadow

into the form of a personal God. He is conceived of as approving and applauding the work one does, and he upholds us against the manifest failure of others to "understand" us.

"The Persona becomes extremely bleak, lonesome and cheerless, when even this facile and natural respondent, this ultimate residual Lover-Shadow, is ruled out by reason. I have paid in unhappiness for putting God to the test of an exhaustive scrutiny, just as I have paid for scrutinizing love too closely. Also I have framed my Persona in too great a frame for steady happiness. I suffer and am often ineffective because of the relative thinness and diffuseness of the Lover-Shadow I am able to evoke in these ampler regions of my mind. I am half starving and constantly longing for responses to and confirmations of these large propositions in which my mind is framed. I falter and fall into lassitudes. 'Damn this highbrow stuff!' is the response of my overstrained personality. Or I fall into that state of mind which the religious mystic expresses when he says that God has abandoned him. Scanty crumbs of comfort come to me, letters from strangers, unexpected intelli-

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gent co-operations, casual endorsements by likeable people about me, the sudden discovery of an independent parallelism. But it is all very thin and colourless in comparison with the rush of reassurance, surety and exaltation that comes, in the narrower field of sexual relationship, with a confession and display of personal love. Then we come out of the starlight into a warm room—and the cold challenge of the stars can be forgotten—for a time. 'Righteous self-applause' has neither arms nor lips. So we long for the woman—who perhaps longs for us—and when we seem to meet, it is hard to keep our heads and realize that the true Lover-Shadow has in fact simply veiled its face.

"Personal love is like reading a poem or going to a theatre. It may be a stimulating indulgence or it may be a wasteful diversion of response. The Lover-Shadow, to any wide-ranging mind, cannot remain a person indefinitely.

"Let me now write something about a third factor in the drama of the human brain.

"In the framework of the mind—of my mind at least and minds like it—sits something which is

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neither of the Persona nor of the Lover-Shadow. It is a restraining and inhibiting power. In its cruder form it is just Doubt or 'Think Again'; at a more conscious level it is the critical intelligence, which says continually and penetratingly—in a still small voice that emerges again from the most passionate forgetfulness, 'Is that so? Is that good enough?'

"It is a monitor insisting continually upon quality. It undermines our Gods as we erect their images; it is the ruthless patient corrective of our love fixations.

"It grows perhaps out of the instinctive distrust and suspicions of the barbaric man, but it is different in its deliberation; it doubts and undercuts and refines itself; it keeps its head and does not merely paralyze. It is not simply negative. It halts the will, not to frustrate it, but to assemble and reorganize it. It is something growing to greater and greater importance in the human mind. It attacks all our personal concentrations and tends to analyze and diffuse all our attempts to get the Lover-Shadow as a clear, definite, harmonious *vis-à-vis* to our Persona. It kills our Gods and

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our Lovers, and if they rise again, they rise again changed.

“Jealousy is a peculiar activity of this inhibitory power. At its lower level it is Iago. It is the accumulation and development of all the reserves that are snubbed and ignored in the love abandon. In its cruder form it undermines our assurance so unsubtly that we blaspheme the Gods we worship and kill the thing we love. But what I want to ask myself and my reader here is this: whether, although jealousy at the level of spite and murder is wrong, just like lust at the indiscriminate raping level or appetite at the gluttonous gobbling level, yet nevertheless whether that is any valid reason for setting the critical intelligence aside and saying of God or Lover, ‘Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him?’

“That is what we do in ‘Acts of Faith,’ and that is what we do in a love fixation. Is that emotional concentration anything more than a forced and partial coagulation of something that can never be completely coagulated and rounded off to our desire?

“In the case of sex, there have been and are

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sound biological reasons, of course, for such an irrational and passionate concentration and exclusiveness—extending, it may be, over years—but in a developing world society these biological needs become less and less imperative. Is not man, as he becomes civilized and enlarged, moving away from all such fixations and devotions—towards a Lover-Shadow which will remain diffused and towards a code of personal relationship which will be more and more open and free from binding irrevocable assignments? However we, in this age, may be impelled to fixations by uncorrelated instincts and confused traditions, yet the men and women who will follow us will, I think, guard themselves against devotion and its inevitable sequel, jealousy, just as we guard ourselves against repletion or a dangerous cliff. Devotion, they will realize, brings jealousy as a blinding light brings dangerous shadows, and so they will worship God—that cosmic Lover-Shadow—in ten thousand varied intimations of order and splendour that will never crystallize into a creed, and seek love and find love in the Lover-Shadow here and there and beyond, with their impulse to focus and mono-

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polize clearly understood, present indeed for consideration but sanely under control.

“But such an open life must be truly open, and the last use of the jealous critical factor will be the pursuit of deceptions and pretences.

“ ‘Why did you lie to me, my dear?’ we may ask.

“ ‘To intensify,’ will be the answer, ‘and now the lie wears thin, let us throw it aside like the flowers I gave you. They were withered long ago—though they are not forgotten.’

“Maybe love only becomes true love when we know it for a dream.

“And now, I have lived, and there is little more before me. The experiments continue multitudinously before me, but my contribution to them closes. I conclude, from my experiences and from the disorders into which the world is falling, that is to say, from my human experience in detail and my human experience in gross, that in the avoidance of ego-centred coagulation in the Lover-Shadow, that is to say in a perpetual resistance to the gravitation of jealousy, in a real watchfulness against and resistance to monopolistic personal love or

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partisanship or racial or class prejudice—for these are all parallel processes upon different bases—in a steadfast devotion to truth and ‘Man,’ in a free wide, generous, unpossessive caritas for the individuals about us, and in a frank and cheerful readiness to return their love in due kind and measure as they evince it, lies the best hope we have for happiness both as individuals and as a race.’

The Same Restated

THAT statement, carefully written though it was, did not content Steele. Presently he was writing it all over again—with a difference. I have already noted in Chapter VII what I have characterized as his disposition to chiaro-oscuro in his philosophical reflections, and particularly his search for stereoscopic effects through divergent variations of statement. Moral, social, historical reality he held is multidimensional; it cannot be rendered flatly. It has to be walked round and seen from this point of view and that.

Here he is at it again:

"I will, I think, jot down here, as clearly as I can, in spite of the fact that it will seem almost purely repetition, the essential elements of this idea of the Lover-Shadow.

"The Persona, as I have already explained it, is the pausable delusion one entertains about oneself. It is the story we tell about ourselves in relation

to the outer world. It is our nearest attempt at self-knowledge. It is not the self. It is not consciousness. But however loosely it may fit reality, it is *the necessary imaginative implement*, the necessary vestment of the self, for conscious social conduct. It fluctuates—expands with gathering confidence, responds to flattery, to suggestion of all sorts, is vividly dominant or—in disinterested thought or effort—becomes background-like.

“Now the Lover-Shadow as I conceive it, is a complexity of desire for the confirmation of and for response to the Persona. It is a haunting cloud of possibilities of response we seek continually in the world about us. When the response is most credible the Persona seems realest, our social reactions are most satisfying and behaviour is easiest. Our Persona is irradiated by reception and acceptance. We go on joyfully. When there is not this correspondence of outer acceptance with our inner self-estimate, there is mental discomfort and the Persona has to be adapted; consolatory complexes are developed to compensate for the gaps and pressures of the misfit.

“This description of the duologue of Persona

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and Lover-Shadow applies—it is fairly evident—only to a self-conscious more or less social individual. And social organization being based on the sexual association and the family grouping arising out of it through a retardation of separation, then it follows that the more simple and primitive forms and relations of the Persona and the Lover-Shadow must be such a reciprocal dualism as we find either in that of sexual display and acceptance, or else of the relations of parent and offspring. The interaction of Persona and Lover-Shadow will be a reciprocity either directly sexual or arising at one remove out of the primary sexual encounter.

“The current biological analysis of the social organization of gregarious and mutually helpful animals, shows that the intricate relationships of diverse types of individual in the human society—*e.g.* of judge, teacher, merchant, soldier—arose through the elaboration of these primary attractions and services, elaborations into which threads of distrust, hostility and cannibalism have been caught up and interwoven, so that indiscriminating competitive injury gives place to a give-and-take

system of exaction and help, on a continually larger and subtler scale.

“Concurrently with this social evolution, there has been a vast expansion and elaboration of the Persona, and that necessitates a corresponding expansion of its correlative, the Lover-Shadow. The Lover-Shadow, to justify the amplification of the Persona, must undergo an equivalent expansion, not only through extension but by incorporating background behind background of the few limited individuals who were its original, its germinal, cast.” “Here”—it is Steele who writes—“I have had to record the failure of my mind to achieve any correlated expansion of the Lover-Shadow. The expansion of my Persona to planetary and entirely modern dimensions has used up too much of my mental energy. I am too largely an extrovert to have given the same close sustained attention to my emotional life and my detailed motivation, as I have given to my vision of the world. It is only now that I take up this business of my Lover-Shadow in real earnest and face its primitiveness and its vagueness. It is only now that I apprehend my essential prematureness.

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“My personal relations, and particularly my sexual history, have been in the main a story of puerile and primitive reactions by the way. Mine is a highly developed intelligence so far as its main lines and scope go; a head (to use head and heart in an old-fashioned sense) swept and garnished, enlarged and innovating, with a still puerile and instinctive heart and vanity. My character, my personality, has not kept pace with my wits. There, I am typical of my time.

“Perhaps this is a necessary order of development for the human brain, and for a period my case may become increasingly common. We, my sort, are the un-mated pioneers; we feel unmated because we have not yet learnt to generalize the mate. Conceptions of the Persona far outrun our imaginative anticipations of the Lover-Shadow. Intellectual realizations are much easier and swifter than moral reconstructions. There is an inward corrosion in all critical minds; it is the price the morally inadequate must pay for the powerful solvents that give lucidity. Minds that become futuristic in their determination of values are necessarily discontented as well as critical in habit

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and they will not readily accept the mere appearance of response and acceptance. They will be searching for a type of Lover-Shadow which has not yet appeared in the world. Loneliness is as inevitable for them as fatigue for a mountaineer.”

And Again Restated

BUT still Steele felt that he was not saying what was in his mind. His practice of formulating his ideas at different levels and with differences of texture, and leaving the duplicated statements to reflect upon each other—the truth “quivering” between them—he carried here even to the pitch of triplication. I have found a third, a pencil-draft of disconnected but quite understandable jottings, about this Lover-Shadow idea.

“The Will will not work confidently and happily without assurance,” he writes; “that is all that this Lover-Shadow amounts to—or nearly all. . . .

“The executives of big businesses find it necessary to sustain their will through many of their operations by keeping about them a number of subordinates, cooing approval, their ‘Yes-men.’ These hold the principal to his determined course. Well, this Lover-Shadow of mine, so earnestly sought and so indispensable to mental contentment, is for all practical purposes nothing more than the

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Yes-Man—or Yes-Woman—of the Persona. . . .

“I don’t think the human being is built, I don’t think the Persona is so constructed, as to carry on without a Yes-Man or Yes-Men. . . .

“Normal men and women, so far as I can judge by my own experience, have an almost irresistible tendency to mix up the recurrent urgency of sex-desire with the ever-present need for that confirmatory ‘Yes.’ It is a superposition of functions, like the way in which most of the bodily glands have both internal and external secretions. It is not perhaps a necessary association, but nevertheless these needs happen to be so associated. . . .

“The critical intelligence, the antagonist of all mysticism or romanticism, will not tolerate a sentimental slurring of these facts. . . .

“There is really no weaving these two strands into a coherent whole. That is why the personal love story will remain perennially unsatisfactory and perennially interesting. With our utmost efforts to imagine the contrary, personal relationships remain almost as accidental and unavoidable as food or the weather. They stimulate, they can surprise with an unexpected delightfulness, we

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cannot live without their happening, but they change and pass. We can no more arrest the happy moment than we can hold a lovely sunrise or sunset. The roving mind falls back at last upon a stoical self-identification with the specific Man, upon self-forgetfulness in enduring work for the world community, as the one and only enduring refuge from frustration. We have to make the best of that. Whether we accept it in a mood of religious exaltation or whether we accept it with a wry smile is our individual affair; that is how things are."

Frustration of Women through Feminism

NOW here in my character of editor and summarist I introduce a critical section under a heading that Steele never employed. A certain self-contradiction common to most men, was in his case evident to an exceptional degree. Temperamentally he was extremely heterosexual; yet intellectually he was disposed to ignore sex. He wanted to ignore femininity almost as much as Plato did. When he writes Man, he means men and women. Yet his male bias is as evident when he writes about Man, as his cosmopolitan-Gentile bias is evident when he writes about Jews.

In his attempt to state a general theory of love in terms of the Persona and the Lover-Shadow, of which I have given an account in Chapter XIX, it is difficult to realize—though it was undoubtedly the case—that he meant it to apply to the human make-up irrespective of sex. The chapter starts off in that way and then presently we are inundated with purely masculine statements, and particularly

with the desires and feelings of Steele himself. He confesses his obstinate disposition for a Personal, Intimate, Subservient, Devoted Private Divinity and, going frankly male, for "a strong, quietly animated slave-goddess." But that is not the correlative of any sort of feminine persona. That surely has to be transposed to some such phrase as "a strong, quietly animated child-master" to give it any meaning at all to a woman. Or in the case of the highly amative woman it might perhaps be "strong animated slave-gods." With these qualifications most of the preceding chapter on love can be read as approvingly by a woman as a man.

Steele was absolutely convinced that there was no essential difference, apart from differences necessitated by the sexual organization, between the brains of men and women. Differences in size and weight have nothing to do with the quality of the intelligence. Just as he insisted that apart from errors, all men must think alike and could with proper elucidation be made to think alike, so he held that, given lucidity, men and women must think in practically identical terms. In our world

to-day, with its increasing sensitiveness and awareness, there is a widespread realization of a frustration of love, which applies *mutatis mutandis* to both sexes. Frustration may be more frequently realized by women than by men, but there is no specific "Frustration of Women" as such. Yet their organic and social circumstances force them as a class to an intenser apprehension of personality than men, they are more troubled and distressed by acute personal relations, and most of them find it even more difficult than men do, to escape from the ego-centred "body of this death" to the stoical freedom, the impersonal immortality of Man, the "sex-forgetting unending beginner." But that difference in circumstances does not justify an antagonism. Women need not visit their share in the universal disillusionment with sex, in a resentful war upon men because they are not the subservient Lover-Shadows they seemed to promise to be. The men also have had their extravagant expectations and their disillusionments. Those expectations, those discontents, are mother Nature's way with us. She cheats, she excites us, rouses vast vague expectations, and leaves us at

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loggerheads, and we are foolish to visit that upon one another. Man's business is to defeat Nature and reverse history.

The same greater intensity of personal relationships which makes it more difficult for woman to achieve a generous modern stoicism, makes it at the same time more necessary for her ultimate serenity that she should do so. The personal emotional life of a normal woman comes to a climax sooner than a normal man's, and in a world of restrained births less of her is being consumed by her special sexual function. I should have imagined that following this line of thought, Steele would have looked to find a large proportion of his Illuminati and a considerable amount of the energy needed by the New Beginning, among women. The fact remains that he did not do so.

Steele hated any specific "Woman's Movement," any militant Feminism, for the same reason that he hated every sort of nationalism, Biblical Judaism, "Aryanism," racial barriers and class traditions. He hated all vindication systems, all revenge systems, of motives. He hated people who nursed "wrongs." The "wrongs" of Ireland

—of India—of women, roused an almost sadistic impatience in him. His mystical practicality rebelled against the waste of life upon such assertive vindictiveness. They were to him “nagging malignant stupidities.” They were like fights among the team dogs in the traces of a sledge, passion and instinct breaking up a common purpose. They divided up our kind, they complicated and entangled every issue on the way to the liberal world community which was for him the practical objective of life.

“Come out of Israel,” said Steele to the young ambitious Jew. “Forget about it. Come out of Feminism,” I think he would have said—but for his own persistent adolescent heterosexuality—to every intelligent woman.

The Expansion of Man's Imagination

huge work remains clumsy and unfinished. But in one fragment he shows a very clear sense that, in any case, however long he lived to work upon it, it was destined to be incomplete. He remarks that he has chosen his title wrongly. It should have been "*An Introduction to the Study of the Anatomy of Frustration.*" It is a study that can never be completed while life endures. Every life takes it up again from a slightly novel angle and under slightly novel conditions. Each phase of history reveals unexpected differences and new problems.

But that does not diminish the value of this primarily important study. Rather it emphasizes its necessity. No progress can go on without an exhaustive study of failure. The most fruitful study for the scientific historian is the study of the defeated.

Volume thirteen of Steele's *Anatomy* remains a mere project. It was to have been a study of art and literature *as frustration!*

Hardly anything was completed in his notes; there is little more than a shapeless appeal for a new poetry, a kinetic art, a vast renewal and reorientation of literature, not from without but from within.

For Steele there were no "classics." There are no immortal works of art. The best become in time museum pieces. Some of the worst may survive beside them because of their unpremeditated revelations. The whole being of Man is immortal, but not human incidents and interludes. "Dons and schoolmasters never understand this. They drag their once-living classics about with them as mad Joanna of Spain carried her dead husband wherever she went. They dote on the glazed eye, on the inapplicable hand." In University College, London, the stuffed skin of Bentham presides at certain council meetings. University College is never to get away from Bentham. The recognition that scholarship is taxidermy may not always be as frank as that, but in general it is quite as effective.

Steele's adventures among masterpieces produce only a restrained enthusiasm. He has left notes for

various critical studies, none of which were ever completed. He sketched a sort of "Natural History of Reputations." Why the fuss about Burns? he asks, "about Sir Walter Scott, about Homer (in the Gladstonian period), about either Lawrence, about Dostoievsky, about Gorky, about Goethe, about Longfellow, about Joseph Conrad, about Bernard Shaw?"—and so on. He finds explanations in their circumstances. He is amused by the firm belief of our whole world that Shakespeare was peerless, while at the same time no one can tell which of the plays and which parts of the plays ascribed to him were really written by that inimitable pen.

There are no great men for Steele, there is only the greatness of Man. Our multitudinous literature he surveys as if it were no more than a vast pile of old letters and documents. Scholars will burrow among it to select anthologies and make books about books. Archæologists will dig in it. But the present phase of the true writer of it all, Humanity, is more interesting than the past, and the future still more exciting. The good things will be said again and again and said better. The old music will be rewritten for more delicate

instruments and greater power. We shall value Velasquez as we value the Altamira drawings. He was wonderful, and so were they at their time and in their place. The stage play will follow the masque and the miracle play. A new sound-drama upon the screen is even now struggling into existence, which must ultimately supersede opera and theatre. The novel is dying of dropsy. It is full of matter and formless. Its hectic grandchildren, the detective stories, play with a sort of brisk tediousness in the death chamber. The easel picture, the hung picture, has nearly run its course. . . .

And so on.

Frustration for the artist lies in his envelopment by tradition. He who imitates is lost. He who repeats is lost. He who "rebels" consciously and shapes his work by avoiding and contradicting the old is lost. Here more than anywhere, what is done must be new—not extravagantly and wilfully new, which, indeed, is not new at all, being no more than the negative form of the old—but authentically new. The true artist is innocent of the past. It is not his fault. It is not his affair. He does not defy it. He is naïve without being ignorant ;

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he knows and is not controlled by his knowledge. That cannot come of set intention; artists are born, not made. In art predestination is everything. If you are born damned you are damned; you had better teach in an art school. The business of the artist in any field is the enlargement of appreciation. He is a mutation. He is the growing-point of the species. He is perpetually expanding the field for the play of the human imagination.

All that has gone before in *The Anatomy of Frustration* was preparatory, says Steele. "World-pax, economic efficiency, universal education, all these things we find in the long run have but one objective, to make the world safe for artists." Then he strikes out the last word and substitutes "Art—the undying explorer." And with that emendation it seems to me most of the distinction between art and science disappears.

A Candid World

STEELE'S third unfinished volume, his fourteenth in the whole plan, is even more like a scaffold surrounded by building material than its predecessor. While that deals with the artist, this deals with the scientific worker. For Steele the "scientific method" is simply candour. The real man of science tells what he knows as plainly as he can and listens for any jar against fact. He searches for these discords. Wherever a jar is detected he adjusts. The progress of science is the exposure of inaccuracies. Its history is a history of frustrations admitted, examined and overcome.

Essentially science is candour. What is the scientific method? Bare, cold, clear, sceptical observation, and then the utmost precision of statement. Continual re-examination of the statement. Incessant search and testing.

Telling the truth is the latest achievement of the human mind. So far the achievement is very imperfect. The author of the Ten Commandments

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seems to have been unaware that truth-telling was possible. To abstain from false witness against one's "neighbour" was as much as one could expect. Even to-day candour shares the prejudice against nudism. There is a real resentment in most minds against people who talk or depict too nakedly. At the mildest, the candid are accused of a lack of humour. Most of us prefer to float half-hidden even from ourselves, in a rich, warm, buoyant, juicy mass of familiar make-believe. Until it overwhelms us. We were born in the morass and we are at home there. Our minds are still in the amphibian stage and cannot hold out in the dry clear air. Enlightenment, we feel, is a treacherous synonym for indiscreet or unpleasant revelation.

This will not always be so. A day will come when we shall cease to hide from each other, creeping into holes and crannies away from each other. Man is born intricate, secretive and self-defensive, and he *learns* to become frank and simple. The course of evolution is from the roundabout to the direct. The better part of education is emancipation. . . .

"Candour, like everything else worth while, is

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a thing to be achieved with infinite difficulty. Candour is not being simply indecent or cruel or bleakly elementary. There are times when the whole spectacle of human life seems to me like a crowd of people without eyes for sight, tongues for speech or hands for gesture. They have a sense of something supremely urgent that they have to realize and say; they are all seeking by deed and word to realize and say it; but they cannot see it, say it, shape it. If only they could find the undiscovered word, the Open Sesame, all would be well. Our deeds are dreadful because our minds are dark. . . .''

The Frustration of Vision, the Frustration of Truth; these were to figure in Steele's book as the crowning Frustrations against which the human mind is pitted.

A Note on Individuality

I FIND among the loose material waiting to be assimilated in Steele's unfinished thirteenth volume a little note on individuality which seems to link up to his assertion that "artistry" is the live end of existence. It is headed "*All real individual expression is artistry.*" It seems to refer to the rash confidences of the Love volume.

"It is impossible, I find, to write about myself with as much sincerity as I have sought, telling of limitations, frustrations, intrinsic failure and accepted defeats, without the picture beginning to take on more and more the quality of a fated destiny, without feeling more and more plainly how close one's experiences have come to those of a creature of innate impulses, caught by circumstances and making an ineffectual buzzing about it like a fly on a fly-paper. I drift towards an admission of complete predestination. My story, apparently of a character and a will, is really the trace of the reaction between internal and external forces,

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equally destined and rigid, 'as it was written from the beginning.'

"This is an aspect of life that my militant instinct has always been disposed to ignore and against which every active factor in me shouts 'No!' But something fundamental will have been withheld from the reality of the whole, there will be a loss of solidity, a flatness, if I do not recognize the presence of this aspect in my mind. And also it is present in my mind that some flies (a little sticky perhaps and hampered) do somehow get away from the fly-paper of circumstance.

"I am left in the end with an unconquered sense of my own individuality as significant, as primary. My last words about this self I have been ransacking are this, that this creature *has had, has and transmits free-will*. Not much free-will, not much courage or assertion, but some. More than the fly on the fly-paper has. An increasing amount. And free-will *is* individuality, and individuality is nothing else. Individuality is intrinsic uniqueness and spontaneous initiative. Spontaneous initiative is creation, and creation is divinity."

New World Ahead

EVEN if Steele had completely filled up the vast framework of his scheme; even if he had lived on for decades, toiling at his tremendous task, I doubt if he would have made any profound modification of this titanic conception of a world revolution beyond all precedent, which was to produce this world community of candid individuals, thinking freely, "liberal-socialist," at once experimental and devoted, intensely themselves and mystically united, to which all his fragments and projects contribute. He began with that and I doubt if anything would have prevented him ending with that. The evocation of these men and women, these generations of the incessant New Beginning, this dream of the perpetual creative accumulation of organized power against blind chance and the inhumanity of material forces, seemed to him the only thing in life that was fundamentally worth while. (Fundamentally. As against a myriad things if life, things by

the way, that were incidentally quite worth while.)

He held that every sane mind which explored these issues as comprehensively as he had done would be compelled to arrive at a practically identical conclusion. The developing human brain, developing healthily, *must* produce that, just as the developing brain of the human embryo must produce a Sylvian fissure and a large pre-frontal region. This idea of a world revolution taking place concurrently in the minds of men and in human organization, must arise in due course in the developing racial intelligence. There is no acceptable alternative. The only alternatives we can envisage are intolerable prospects of biological disaster, chronic war, social deterioration, diseases, specific differentiation, generation after generation of distressed existences with extinction looming at the end. Either we *take hold of our destiny* or, failing that, we are driven towards our fate, and he declares passionately that in this general form he has worked out, in this new religious life and in this new morality which he has extracted from his encyclopædic review as the quintessence of

human faith and purpose, we *can* indeed take hold.

And here once more, that queer shimmer in Steele's method of thought to which I have already called attention, must be recalled. He believed in his new world profoundly—yes; as something not merely possible but practicable and urgent; yet he distrusted his methods of expressing it. He was sceptical of the contemporary human thinking instruments, of the entire validity of every phrase he used. There is always, therefore, an elusive marginal qualification in what he says. He seems to have felt he was never quite grasping or saying the truth he apprehended. Language cannot tell it yet; the eye cannot picture it. He faces a light that dazzles him. He states his will for world revolution barely, in order to make his intention plain; and manifestly he dislikes the barrenness of his statement. The reality of this human revolution now in progress must penetrate everything; it cannot be abstracted.

"I say it all so badly," he laments in one place; "and yet, believe me, I am saying it."

He cannot eliminate a flavour of paradox in his discussion; it is in the nature of things as they are.

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For instance, freedom and the new discipline must march together. His man of science has to seek candour as the Knights of the Round Table sought the Holy Grail, at any cost, and for Steele "artist" is always free explorer and free reporter. Yet all this freedom of thought and expression and all this unhampered subtlety of mental effort which he demands for and from mankind, is compatible, he believed, with a united, disciplined, powerful and implacable politico-social drive. Men in infinite diversity of detail are yet to advance on a common front. They can and will do this because they all have similar brains, subject to the same processes of thought, and they are all under similar necessities. Free world co-operation is possible. Our political, our social, our economic behaviour will be the expression of what we have in common, so soon as our minds are liberated from the separating distortions of accident, habit and tradition.

He believed that these new types of his, no longer distressed by lack of response and association, no longer distraught by the insufficiency of their lover-shadows, emancipated from irrational

discontents, gathering self-assurance, discovering and sustaining one another, developing a closer and closer solidarity among themselves, "diverse in their community," are capable of taking the material order of the whole world in hand as one collective enterprise. And that collective enterprise is simpler and more hopeful than any of our national or sectarian enterprises. It is the only hopeful enterprise for an enlightened mind. He admitted no frustration as inevitable, nor that the utmost intricacy of persistent thought endangers an ultimate harmony in practical adjustment.

This finely balanced informal community of his "new moderns," by virtue of its common elucidation, is to overcome every brute force in the world. Cyclopean prejudices, innate misconceptions, oceans, mountain barriers, limitless space, the protean blind obstructions of nature within us and without, will not prevail against the crystallizing will, the ordered solvent knowledge, the new education, the achieved clear-headedness, of an illuminated race. Amidst the fear and lassitude and ugly darkness of our world to-day, Steele could believe that. He believed that the specific Man in

us, because of the essential similarity of our minds, has the power to assimilate, utilize, override and fuse all our individual divergences.

There are times when I turn over these bales and folders of Steele's, which, in their queer way, in their quaint simulation of an encyclopædic index and summary, do evoke a vision of all human literature and history and experience, and it seems to me that his aspirations are no more than the voice of a lost creature crying in the night. And then again I find it is not so. I realize with a start that I am beginning to see things about me more clearly than I used to do before I set myself to explore the world with him. What were once dark impenetrable masses are taking on form and detail. And then it is that some valiant note among his memoranda rings out like cock-crow and I find that I, too, am moved to believe that this dawn of a greater life, this New Beginning, this world revolution, does now impend.

“The Courage to be Patient”

Is this conception of a New Model for humanity a rational forecast or a self-protective dream?

Steele had moods in which this question was possible. His answer varied with the quality of his blood-stream and the vitality in his body. Sometimes when the Lover-Shadow seemed real and sufficient to him, he was sure that he was only anticipating what everyone must think to-morrow. Sometimes in a rebellious mood when he felt antagonized and unsupported, he would say that he did not care what others, intimate or remote, thought of his design for life; he would impose it upon them and fight it through or die. And finally, in a sort of ecstasy of loneliness and hopelessness, he would say that it was a dream he chose to wrap about his shivering mind in a universe of freezing frustration. It was a dream as good as any other that a rational mind could discover. Maybe it was Burton who was right in his estimate of the world, but that was no reason why one

should not resort to self-delusion for consolation.

Because of his essential loneliness Steele could not help but drift up and down the scale of these various psycho-physical moods. There was no one to whom he could surely go for reassurance. He had no help. He did despond, but it was not in his nature to despond continually for he had brave endocrines and presently he would be cock-a-hoop again and acutely ashamed of his despondency. "Of course there are others, and the likes of us multiply, but we cannot spend our time telling each other what fine fellows we are. Naturally we do not hear from one another."

In his last letter to himself Steele was telling himself to stick it.

"We must have the courage to be patient. Individual incompleteness is a private matter. If you fell down yesterday, stand up to-day. It is nobody's tragedy but your own. What you are now doing matters; not what you did. Your life is only a bit of a whole. The men of science understand this and everyone must understand it. There is a struggling divinity in everyone. Man persists. Man grows and advances and it is his will

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to grow and advance. We make a pattern better than we know. Keep on with it.”

These were the disconnected last sentences Steele wrote before he died.

He jotted them down on his bedside writing-pad and in the morning he was found dead. He may have been awakened by the pain of his old war-wound, and perhaps he wrote them down to distract his attention before he took his overdose of sedative. They do not read to me like the thoughts of a man who was just about to commit suicide. They are the words of a man who was, in absolute reality, living—life without end—not for himself but for ever.

I can quite believe that Steele took a heavy dose and then, as he thought and scribbled, quite forgot about it and presently took another and possibly a third. He was very absent-minded when he was excited in thought.

THE END



The following three books frame the shape of a modern Encyclopaedia (excluding mathematical and physical science and general philosophy):

THE SCIENCE OF LIFE by H. G. Wells, J. S. Huxley and G. P. Wells and (what are practically its sequels),

THE OUTLINE OF HISTORY by H. G. Wells, advised originally by Sir Ray Lankester, Sir Harry Johnston, Professor Gilbert Murray, Mr. Ernest Barker and others.

THE WORK, WEALTH AND HAPPINESS OF MANKIND by the same author assisted by a number of specialists.

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME by H. G. Wells, discusses contemporary revolutionary forces in the form of anticipating fiction. The technique of a modern revolution is also discussed in his WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH OUR LIVES? and his fundamental philosophy in FIRST AND LAST THINGS.

